A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 13 May 1986
£1

THE BIGGEST SELLING COMMODORE MAG IN BRITAIN!

ZZAP! 64

MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFT WARE



PAST & FUTURE ZOMBIES

Cauldron II and Antiriad from PALACE are set to spring on an unsuspecting world . . .

INFOCOM

The American Adventure Wizards Interviewed

ALTER EGO

We look at an alternate way of life

WIN!

- A COMMODORE 64 and DISK DRIVE
- A FANTASTIC RACING BIKE

ZZAP! SPECIAL COMPETITIONS!
Details inside this issue!

THRUST! The budget game of a lifetime from Firebird?

SUPER BOWL Ocean's latest Sports Sizzler unveiled!

RENAMING THE GAME The men at Imagine

COMMODORE 64

Arcade-

Killer-by[...]
fro[...]
Kon[...]

YIE AR KUNG FU

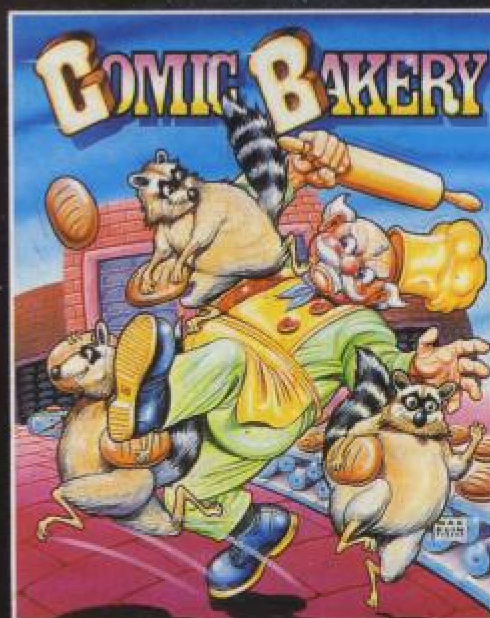
If you can master the ten moves, expect the unexpected and FIGHT for your LIFE against the formidable masters of the martial arts you may live to meet them again on the mountain or in the Temple.

COMIC BAKERY

*Panic in the bake-shop
*Fast and furious arcade fun.
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ARC[...]
HO[...]
SHO[...]

imagine
...the name of the game

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action



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ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 13 MAY 1986

Editor
Roger Kean
Assistant Editor
Gary Penn
Sub-editor
Sean Masterson
Software Editor **Julian Rignall**
Software Reviewers **Gary Liddon, Paul Sumner**
Staff Writer **Lloyd Mangram**
Art Editor **Oliver Frey**
Art Director **Dick Shiner**
Production Controller
David Western
Production
Gordon Druce, Tony Lorton
Process camera
Matthew Uffindell
Photographer **Cameron Pound**
Advertisement Manager
Roger Bennett
Subscriptions **Denise Roberts**
Mail Order **Carol Kinsey**

Editorial and production:
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ
☎ 0584 5851
Mail order and subscriptions
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB
☎ 0584 5620

☎ Advertising Information & Bookings
0584 4603 or 5852
Roger Bennett (direct line & answer service) 0386 833033

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ABC

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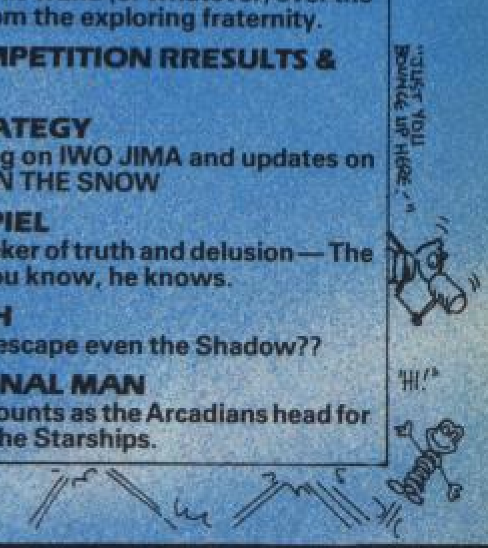
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PRIZE COMPETITIONS

MAY SPECIALS

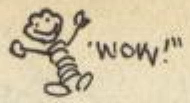
HOT GAMES FOR MAY

ZZAP SECTIONS

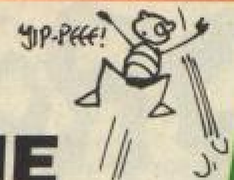


The next issue of ZZAP! goes on sale from 8th May. As a citizen, it is your duty to purchase a copy. If you fail in this, well, we'll just have to bring the guillotine back. Tumbrils will roll — you've been warned. Keep your head, keep ahead - Get ZZAP! (You know it makes sense . . .)


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ZZAP! ED





NOW WE'RE THE BIGGEST!

You know that it isn't like anyone at ZZAP! to boast (apart from JR of course), but go on, let us just have one little boast for a change! The latest figures for magazine sales have just been published by ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulations). These are the average monthly sales for the period July to December 85, and they show that ZZAP! 64 is now the leading magazine in the field, with a greater number of copies sold per month in Britain than any other comparable title.

As its editor, I would just like to say 'Thank You' to all readers, because without you, you know, we wouldn't sell a single copy. (Well, I expect Gary Penn's mum might, so would GL's mum, Julian's . . . yes, Sean's Manchester cronies, Lloyd's sister . . . perhaps — anyway, we wouldn't sell more than five copies without you).

I would also like to say 'thank you' to Gary Penn, on whose shoulders the main burden for getting ZZAP! together every month, has fallen. From callow Berkhampstead joystick wiggler to assistant editor of the biggest Commodore mag in Britain in only one year — a real rags to riches story, and in the process he's learnt that definite is spelled with an 'i', 'separate' and 'desperate' may sound the same but don't look the same, and lots of other useful things.

Congratulations too, to our sister mag, CRASH. Its ABC figures show that not only has it outstripped rival *Sinclair User* to become the world's leading Sinclair magazine, but its UK sales have even outstripped those of *Computer & Video Games*, to make it Britain's top selling computer title of any kind.

However. Enough of the backslapping. Back to software — well SOME software. For another month running we can't report happily on the general state of releasing. Loads in the 'pipelines', not a lot emerging. I hope this mental constipation isn't going to result in the software 'runs', a frightening state caused by a flood of releases, followed by the usual symptoms of depression and fitful anger because none of the releases got the attention their owners thought they deserved. There are few things more upsetting than having a couple of months with little happening, and then two with everything that should have happened earlier all compressed up, so we have to skate over so much of it.

Something bad seems to have happened to releasing dates over the past few months, with more and more games 'delayed' or even disappearing altogether. 'Programming complexity' is the popular excuse, but whatever the 'complex' of problems behind delays may be, it they don't do the business much good. There ought to be a machine code laxative available to release programmers from their digestive problems!

So this month we only have two Sizzlers and one Gold Medal. One Sizzler, *Thrust*, is a budget release from Firebird, and the other, *Super Bowl* from Ocean slipped in breathlessly at the last second. The Gold Medal is Activision's weird and wonderful *Alter Ego*, not so much a game, more a way of living. The three have absolutely nothing in common with each other except their cleverness and originality in play and presentation. Thus, at a time when I'm bemoaning the lack of software, I'm also feeling relieved that among what has come in is some excellent stuff. Stuff is what we all thrive on, so let's have lots more stuff as soon as possible please!

THE ZZAP! RATINGS

PRESENTATION: Packaging, printed instructions, on-screen instructions, loading, play options, program facilities (including things like ease of joystick or keyboard control), on-screen impression — everything except the game itself.

GRAPHICS: Variety, detail and effectiveness of screen pictures, quality of animation, smoothness of movement.

SOUND: Variety and effectiveness of sound effects, quality both technically and aesthetically of music. Also: does sound annoy?

HOOKABILITY: How strongly does the game make you want to play it and keep playing it?

LASTABILITY: How long will it keep its hold on you?

VALUE FOR MONEY: Takes into account the price plus all the above ratings.

OVERALL: With all the above ratings in, this is IT! — what the reviewers think in general.

THE ZZAP! LABELS

GOLD MEDAL AWARD: Definitely a game above all others in the month of review. There may not be a Gold Medal game every issue, but if there is, get it! Just occasionally there may be two . . .

SIZZLER: Hot games of the month — must normally score around 90%. We reckon any ZZAP! Sizzler is a great buy, unless you really hate that particular type of game.

GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD ZZAP 64

ZZAP! RRAP

Whew, what a mixed bunch this month! Oddly enough, though, nothing much stood out in terms of a trend, obsession or anything like that, and we all found it hard to pick out a single letter for that coveted software prize. After much soul searching, I decided to give it to this one below — hang on to your hats!



ANGRY PROGRAMMER WRITES ON PIRACY

I'd like to air my views on software piracy, from a different angle for a change. The argument at the moment seems to go. 'A: People who pirate software are lazy little oiks who can't be bothered to fork out for a tape like the rest of us.' B: 'Yes, but at £10 a time, we can't afford to buy them.'

A: 'Well you should do without, or buy budget priced software, etc, etc, etc, blah blah blah. . . .'

Well, I'd like to ask why do some games cost £10, and others £1.99? You may answer that the better quality a game, the higher the price should be. Rubbish! Most games take roughly the same amount of time to write, no more than a few months. (I should know I'm a programmer) The quality comes from the programmer's m/c skills, imagination, artistic talent etc. The Americans whine that their superior games are the product of sixteen years extensive research, hiring the entire armed forces equipment 'to get the atmosphere right', training their company managers to fly F-15 Eagles, and paying programmers up to £35,000 for 'decent' software. They're just playing very expensive executive games, and expect the consumer, who wouldn't know if the atmosphere was 'right' or not, to pay for their indulgence.

Their one single motive for selling games is their sheer greed for profit and power. How can a giant conglomerate boardroom committee know what game a young computer user playing in his bedroom is going to like? They are selfish greedy. They capitalize on anything and everything to satisfy the dollar signs in their eyes. They'd never even consider producing budget software unless their market research planners told them they'd make a healthy profit out of it, and as such, they deserve every bit of piracy that eats away at their mountains of ten pound notes.

Now many people, will write in saying, 'Yes, but software pirates are only in it for the money too.' This is true, and I condemn those who churn out 1000s of copies of pirated games. They're almost as bad as the mega-buck corporations. Isn't it about time computer users opened their eyes to what the software industry is all about?

Surely, 'Small-time back bedroom' programmers getting together to sell their programs at a sensible low-profit making price, all over the country (RE GREVE GRAPHICS, ZZAP!!) is preferable to a small number of 'giants' capitalising and monopolising the scene? How about a 'software collective' based centrally, to help small companies starting up. How about mutual aid between software houses instead of the 'elbow your way to the top' idea. Come on, think about it.

I rest my case.

Nan Ivan, Cheltenham

After a short spell under the charismatic mis-influence of the great British anarchist Tariq Ali, I've never held much with the kind of idealistic nonsense you're spouting here. Maybe that makes me an old fashioned reactionary (snore, snore), but ah know what ah believe (zzzzz). Frankly, Commissar Ivan, if you can get your software collective thing going (after all, it's a relatively free country, for enterprising people), then good luck to you. I don't think you should speak for Greve Graphics, however, there was nothing in our small piece about them that suggested that Bengt wants to be anything other than a mega-buck Swedish software house. (Correct me if I'm wrong, Mr Caroli).

Anyway, despite my personal opinions, I would be interested to hear what other readers think of this, as well, perhaps, what some software houses big and small think of mr Ivan's ideas. In the meantime, to help you get your software combine on the go — £20 worth of free software!
LM

HOW MUCH MODEM TIME?

Dear Zzap!
I had been thinking about buying a modem for sometime and was delighted to see the special offer in your magazine, but I have a few questions to ask, mainly why are you only allowed to use the modem for 6 hours every three months? and what kind of socket do you need for the Commodore modem. Please could you answer these questions? As I am seriously considering buying the modem in your offer.
Ian Macphee, Dunfermline, Fife

You can use you modem for as many hours as you like, Ian, it was only the special offer that included six 'free' hours in each three month period which the offer allows — after that — you pay! The socket you need (the modem comes complete) is the standard modern telephone wall 'flat jack' socket.
LM

BIAS OVER PARADROID

Dear Lloyd,
After reading the letter in your Christmas Special sent in by R SOMAIYA with no address on page 59 titled FACE THE FACTS. I disagree with everything he says.

Paradroid is a BRILLIANT GAME. The main instructions are on the card of the tape box. You do NOT have to wait 5 seconds before you can fire again. As for the word 'biased', R Somaiya probably doesn't know what the word means but what do you expect from someone so narrow minded?

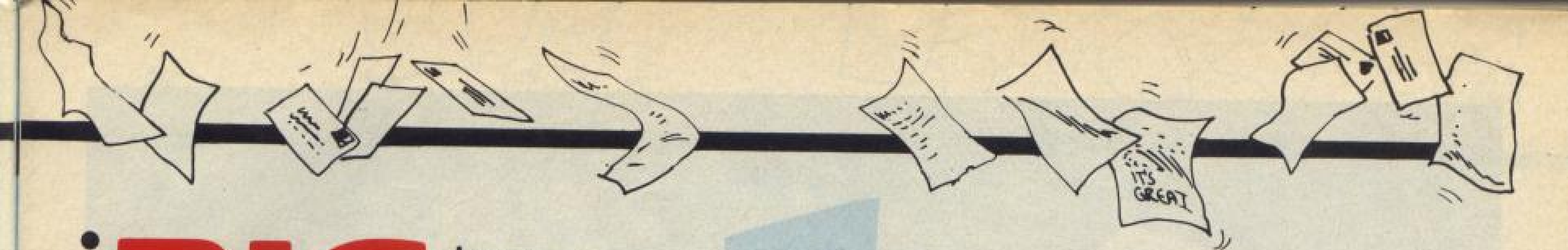
Please print this letter so that R (wally) Somaiya can read it.
Yours Thankfully, N.D.C.

Not fair! You can't slate someone like this without putting your name to the letter! Own up!
LM

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ADS?

Dear Zzap!
I am writing to you to inform you of a small but annoying thing that has always got at me when looking at The Advertisers' index. For example, when I wanted to see what Odin had to offer in issue 8, I was told to look look at pages 95 and 107. I firstly flicked to page 95 to see a *Young Ones* advert, I was quite puzzled. I then had a look at 107 to find myself half way into the adventure section, this I had seen before but I let it pass as an excuse that you must have had a lot on your plate at that time. But this is too much. I wasted about 5 minutes looking through the mag until Hooray, signs of an Odin advertisement. I then found another. They ended up on page 93 (Not a mile away) and 85. Nothing like 95 and 107. I know it must be hectic getting a mag together every month but you must have looked and seen a mistake like that.
Robert Hammerton, Wembley, Middlesex

Obviously everyone tries to avoid this kind of thing happening, but when it does occur, it isn't often anyone's fault — really. You see, pages are allocated to ads before they arrive here, and while they are arriving. As the magazine's layout progresses, various parts of the publication are completed and sent to the printer. If any alterations take place after that, it's too late to do much, and that can include both the positioning (or repositioning) of an ad AND the advertisers' index. I assure you, for us in editorial when we want to look something up, it's as much of a pain as it is for the advertiser and the reader!
LM



BIG MOUTH MANGRAM

Dear ZZAP!
Let me start this letter with that time honoured cliche, 'I don't normally write to magazines but . . .'

I don't normally write to magazines but, after reading Lloyd Mangram's pathetic reply, to Robert Hunt's letter in the March issue of ZZAP!, I feel somebody needs to wake him up to the big bad world outside the ZZAP Towers.

Does he really believe that we are all highly paid magazine writers, who can pop out and 'buy a disk drive' whenever the fancy takes us. After all, we are talking about £150 or more, which isn't exactly peanuts, even to people with jobs, let alone the poor buggers on the dole.

Therefore unless Mr Mangram knows where us poor cassette owners can 'buy a disk drive' for less than £50, he should think about what he says, before opening his mouth and jumping in with both feet.

This may also help prevent him being 'surprised' by the reaction of people who pay good money to read his 'clever' remarks to readers letters.

I don't particularly care whether this letter is printed or not, but I do hope Mr Mangram reads it, or has it read to him, and takes note.

Well, I'm sorry that I had to be prompted into writing in with a complaint, because I have nothing but praise for your previous issues.

Chris Murray, Forest Hill, London

The reply was made in the context of complaints about the increasing amount of disk only software. I repeat, that to restrict EVERYTHING to cassette only games stifles the development of more complex games, some of which may then be enticed onto cassette. However, if a game developed with disk in mind as EVERY American import has been, is then crushed onto cassette and perhaps made virtually unplayable in the process, the software houses can hardly be blamed — as I tried to point out, it's the system we've had imposed on us from the start that is the problem. I can't tell you where to get a disk drive for under £50 (although if you're on the dole, I should have thought that was too much as well), but you could possibly try winning one in this issue of ZZAP! or indeed in next month's issue as well

BMLM

WHAT HAPPENED TO TORIK?

Dear Enigma Force Reviewer,
I know that if I say 'Please please print this letter' you won't print it, but if I don't say 'Please please print this letter' you won't, so what can I say? Please please please print this letter? Never mind that I'm writing to back up a poor forgotten deserted member of the Enigma team. He was the fastest, strongest and most capable member, and he wasn't even in the second game.

Remember the Avian? Yeah, the big guy with the funny legs — put it this way, he was a lot better looking than Zark. I'm talking about Torik! Do any of you people up at ZZAP! remember him?

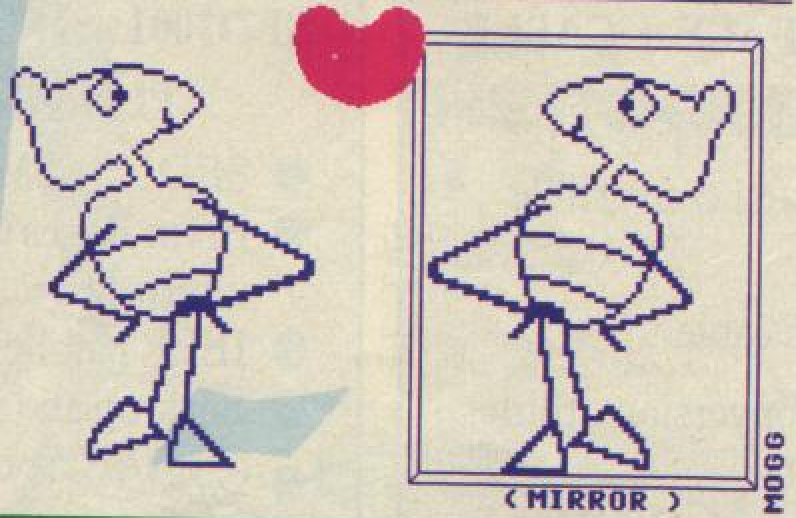
I just want to let the world know that there was six in the team not five, but if you don't print this letter, the world won't know will they? And you won't print this letter because I said 'Please please print this letter', and said that you won't print this letter.

N Murray, Tooting, London

Actually, we're both sort of wrong, because we did say someone was missing — Manto. On the other hand we forgot to add that Torik was also missing, and no one at Beyond had the courtesy to tell the world. They might have at least killed them off heroically in the inlay card! By the way, that was a total waste of 'pleases' as you can see.

LM





DISK UPGRADES

Dear Lloyd,
I was interested to read the letter from John Alsop in the March issue about the disk upgrade policy (or non-policy) operated by US Gold — and a number of other software houses.

I'd just like to point out that Mirrorsoft have always offered, and will continue to offer, disk upgrades for our Commodore 64 cassette products. All the upgrader needs to do is return the cassette (not the packaging or associated print) to us with £3 to cover handling and the cost of the disk, and the upgrade will be sent by return. A slip informing customers of this is included with all C646 tape packs.

Incidentally, we offer the same service to BBC users at £3 and Amstrad users at £5.

Keep up the good work!

Pat Bitton, Marketing Manager, MIRRORSOFT

Thank you for the information, Pat, and you keep up the good work too!

LM

LCP HELP ON THE NET

Dear Lloyd,
When I received the march edition of ZZAP!, TWO days late I might add (!), I promptly opened the mag at ZZAP Rrap as I usually do — but as I browsed through I saw something on page 10 which nearly made my eyes pop out!

In the letter from Simon Breedman he said that ONE PAGE is too much on ol' Compunet, I was so disgusted with seeing this I felt I had to get out the old Easy Script and write a letter of complaint. I bet if Simon had been on the Net (as us dedicated users call it), he would appreciate the vastness and sheer standard of the work on it.

But that is not the only reason I write, I also wanted to draw your attention to a new club coming soon on the Net. After hours of video taping, watching, recording and reading readers' problems encountered with them, I, am setting up The Little Computer People Club or LCPC. will cater for LCP owners who need help on this subject. I, The Mighty Mogg (NOT Bogg) will, with the help of the D Team, ASSIST ANYONE WITH LCP Blues. There will also be as seen in ZZAP Rrap Issue 8 a RSPCLCP or 'The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Little Computer People. '(Phew!!) but we hope this one doesn't become too popular!

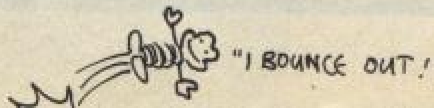
For all C'netters who want to send an idea or two for The LCPC the MBX is MTA1.

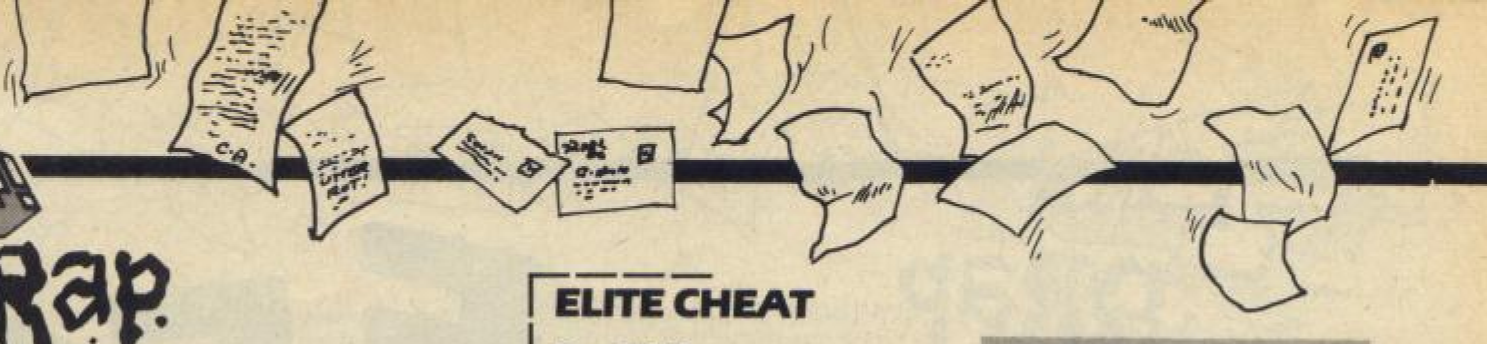
Finally I enclose a few compicies I have done thanks to me Printer.

The Mighty Mogg, aka M Allen, Heanor, Derbyshire

Thanks for the pics — sorry there's only room to print one, but let's face it, that's better than a slap round the face with a wet fish, isn't it? Here, here! we all cry. One page certainly isn't enough for Compunet and all that sails in it! Do I hear a big 'yay' for Brigitte?

LM





ZZAP! RRAP

A FEW POINTS

Dear Zzap!
Dunno why I'm writing this, I'm not knocking any other make of micro: I suppose it's because I've bought every copy of ZZAP! to date, and thought you might like the view of an old-timer on your magazine.

First, great reviews, I never buy a game without first consulting ZZAP! Only disappointed once and that was *Ballblazer*. Guess I'm not on the right wave length for that one. Mind you, *Koronis Rift* more than made up for that hic-cup.

By the way, could you indicate if your reviewing the disk or tape version as I was sorry to find I can't save the game on the tape version of *Koronis Rift*.

Paradroid was well worth the wait and it was great to read of the trials and tribulations as the game was born.

The Xmas issue was superb. As an ex Dan Dare fan I think the artwork was fantastic, even my mate stopped reading my copy and has started buying his own.

A few book reviews and a listing now and again might not go amiss, after all there are more keys on the 64 than SHIFT and RUN/STOP. In second spot the Hints and tips etc are ace. I must thank the Guy/Gal who sent in all those lovely pokes for *Elite*.

How about a few tips for *Scarabaeus*, I'm really stuck on that. Finally, thanks for a great mag despite my little niggles.

Regards to Rockford.
RB George, Huddersfield, W Yorkshire

Thanks for the kind comments. Hopefully, someone will come up with some Scarabaeus tips before much longer. As to books, well it's a bit the same as for 'serious' software — there seems to have been a definite reader rejection of too much serious stuff, and that goes for the books rather a bit. Still, at the risk of getting a disk through my head, I'll suggest it!
LM



ELITE CHEAT

Dear ZZAP!
Why do people make all this fuss about Rockford (and presumably Thing as well now)? Surely people of the taste and intelligence of not only CBM 64 owners but also of ZZAP! readers should have enough sense to merely ignore the little cult(s) if they can't stand him (them). Don't waste valuable Rrap space with such pointless debate oh ye multitudes of ZZAP! readers and get on with something useful, like slagging off the Spectrum. Seriously though some of my best friends are spectrum owners (but I'm sure they'll get over it!)

You know those *Elite* pokes you printed a few issues back? Well try poking the laser locations with 255 to get yourself a really handy gun. Two blasts and anything in the known Universe (Space Stations excluded) is space dust. The only snag is that your energy banks go down rather quickly and you can't do anything about it, still there's a price to be paid for everything. Still on the subject of *Elite*, how do you get the other missions? there must be some value you can poke into a few locations in you commander to set them up. Anyone out there know them?
M Fitzgerald, Hereford

I've no idea why people make a fuss about Rockford — after all, he is quite useful in the margins really. The next writers are so enamoured, they composed a song about the little cult . . .
LM

INTERNECINE WARFARE

Dear Lloyd,
I am not expecting this to be letter of the Month (I will not complain if it is!) I was just wondering if the three best computer mags are jealous of each other.

I get ZZAP!, AMTIX! and CRASH every month and on more than one occasion I have come across remarks that try to make one of the other two mags or their crew look inferior to their own.

An example of this was in AMTIX! issue number 5 when a Mr P Lavers wrote in and said it would be a good idea to feature Rockford who, like the rest of the ZZAP! crew, tends towards swell headedness!

As I think ZZAP! (inc Rockford) is the best of the three mags you can imagine what I thought of AMTIX! and their OTS team (What does OTS stand for anyway?) I can only put it down to the fact that AMTIX! and their crew are jealous of the 64.
Graham Edge, Widnes, Cheshire

Naturally we all try to create a little competitive spirit between the magazines, but honestly, it's all okay, especially down at the Bull Inn, we even buy each other drinks occasionally (except for CRASH/AMTIX! person Robin Candy who's saving up to be a millionaire).
LM

THE ROCKFORD SONG

(To be sung to the tune of 'Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer')

Rockford the cool dude insect, Had a margin i-in ZZAP!, And if you ever saw it, It would really make you laugh.

All of the other reviewers, Used to laugh and call him names, They never let poor Rockford, Help them in reviewing games.

Then one foggy December day, The Editor came to say, Put away your tear soaked tissue, Come and review for The Christmas Issue.

Then how the reviewers loved him, And they shouted out with glee, Rockford the cool dude insect, You'll go down in histor-ee.

Compiled by **Richard Middlemiss and Daniel Reynolds, Dronfield, Sheffield**

Not bad scanning, guys. We ought to get it recorded by 'once only' Rignall and the Digital Shouters on sound saapler. Who knows, it might make a free gift in the next Christmas issue?
LM



GRUMPY REVIEWER

Dear ZZAP!
I am writing to complain about Gary Penn who, unlike Julian Rignall and Gary Liddon, never smiles. Come on Penn at least try to give us one.
Lee Walker

Gary Penn is a very serious minded young man with loads of problems on his mind, like how to keep JR and GL working rather than laughing. However, it's all a bit unfair, seriously, Gary is always smiling, and claims it's defamation of caricature on Oliver Frey's part for drawing him that way.
LM

ZZAP! RRAP

AN OTHER ode

Dear ZZAP!
To complement my 64, I've found a friend in ZZAP!. I'll now begin to be a bore, And sing your praise to Rrap.
I've known you now for one whole year, You've given me lots of pleasure. To let you go would cost me dear, I need you for my leisure.
I write these rhymes — Yes, Yes, they're C---!, It's plain you side with me. I'm certain they're just right for Rrap, Let's see if you agree.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Mrs Beryl Waters, Ancient Mother of Two Zzappers! Solihull, W Midlands

Well it's nice to know what you think of Rrap, Mrs Waters, but as all great poets know, your work is only as good as the vehicle in which it is published!
LM

EE BAH GUM

To ZZAP! Rrap!
Look what's wrong with you lot?, Why are there hardly any letters from us northerners? Every month when I read your mag (which by the way is brill) the names at the end of the letters are all followed by 'Hants, Sussex, London' etc, never 'Durham' or 'good ol Newcastle!'

I bet you won't print this letter because it isn't typed. There's nothing wrong with us lot you know, I mean, I can read and write, though not at the same time and I've got nearly 50,000 credits on *Elite*. So you'd better start by getting this published or I send my whippets and pigeons down to sort you out.
A Lake (Golden Whippet of the North), Houghton-Le-Spring, Tyne & Wear

What utter rubbish, Golden Whippet of the North! There are lots of people signing themselves as 'worried of Cleveland', 'constructive critic of Cumbria' or 'Nerd of Northumberland'. Are you (with your charmingly inverted snobishness) trying to imply that most 64 owners are southern lounge lizards like Liddon?
LM



NO WOMEN!

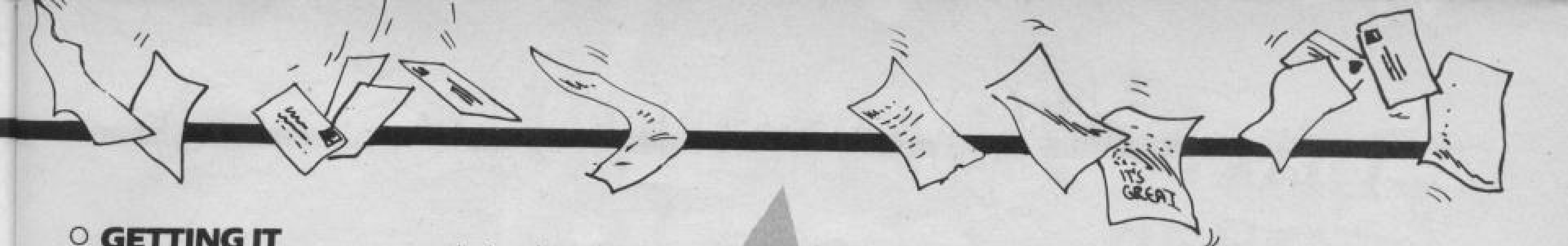
Dear Lloyd,
People write in saying that there's colour missing from your magazine, others say there's a lack of Peripheral reviews but one thing that is definitely lacking is WOMEN.

I've just been looking through some back copies and there's great hulking athletes and half naked muscle men splashed in glorious technicolour over your magazine but there's no women.

No wonder everybody thinks that gamesters are spotty little wimps that say things like 'Mega-Brill' and 'Hyper Cool'. The lack of young blondes dressed in exotic lingerie only enforces this myth. OK so you have introduced a 'Software cuties section' but the sight of Alison Beasley's eyes didn't exactly bring out the animal in me.

We want more games like *Strip Poker* (Hooray) and companies like System 3 who exploit females to the full —) To sum up bring on the bondage.
Percy the Pervert, Crossgates, Leeds

For a start off, I wasn't aware that System 3 actually exploited females to THE FULL — whatever that may be (we don't get a lot of it up here in Ludlow). However, as a very special favour to you Percy P, Gary Penn is allowing me to print a large pic of the eternally gorgeous Claire Hirsch from Activision — my own cutie spread of the month — eat your heart out Shadow!
LM



GETTING IT ALMOST WRONG

Dear ZZAP!
Hi! it's me again I wrote the letter 'always asking questions' that you kindly printed in the Christmas issue, and by the way it's K Durrant not R Durrant, anyway my main point of writing is *Paradroid* — no, not to slag the game off but you.

The game itself is excellent, the ratings you gave it for Hookability, and Lastability Value and Overall are all very accurate but Presentation, Graphics and Sound are highly Overall. Presentation 100% — don't make me laugh in my view 100% means perfect. *Paradroid* has no one or two player option, so joystick or keyboard choice and, at first, the transfer game is very difficult and highly confusing due to poorly written instructions. Graphics 97% another highly overated mark, OK so backgrounds are good but the robots are no more than figures moving around. Sounds as though all games that are good get high marks for everything — *Finders Keepers* is a good example, the game is good but Graphics and Sound are rubbish.

Also Paradroid is probably the most bug-ridden game I've played, *Jet Set Willy* has nothing on this. Below are just some of the bugs I've discovered.
1) Often Robots are Invincible. You can shoot laser bolts at them as long as you like and no damage will be done.
2) Robots often stick to the walls unable to move, once I stuck to a wall after much effort I moved through it and into blank space outside the deck.
3) Sometimes when in transfer mode you will get a robot even if there isn't one in sight you go into the transfer game, there's nothing you can do about it.

You should be able to spot these buys as should Andrew Braybrook.

To spoil your fun I will ask you some questions but this time only three.
1) Are there any versions of the arcade games Star Force, Paperboy, Future Spy, Mad Max, Gauntlet, Ghosts N Goblins, Vastor, and Green Beret.
2) When reviewing games could you tell us why the cassette version needs more than one load, ie Summer Games II, Beach Head II, Skyfox etc.
3) When will Pinball Construction Set on cassette be released? Also will it require more than one ball.
Kevin Durrant, Cromer, Norfolk

Talking of accuracy, Revin (sorry, Kevin), your address, according to you is: Cromer, Norwich, Norfolk. Strange, I always thought Cromer and Norwich were 20-30 miles apart. Right, Paradroid, *having checked with everyone — and believe me, the game has been played at great length by ZZAP! staff (and even by several very noted programmers), and NO ONE has experienced the bugs of which you speak. No further comment. As to the ratings, well, again,* Paradroid *was played not just by the required 3 reviewers, but by many, and the ratings were generally agreed upon, and i know of several games with high Overalls, and low ratings in other departments — just look through the issues.*

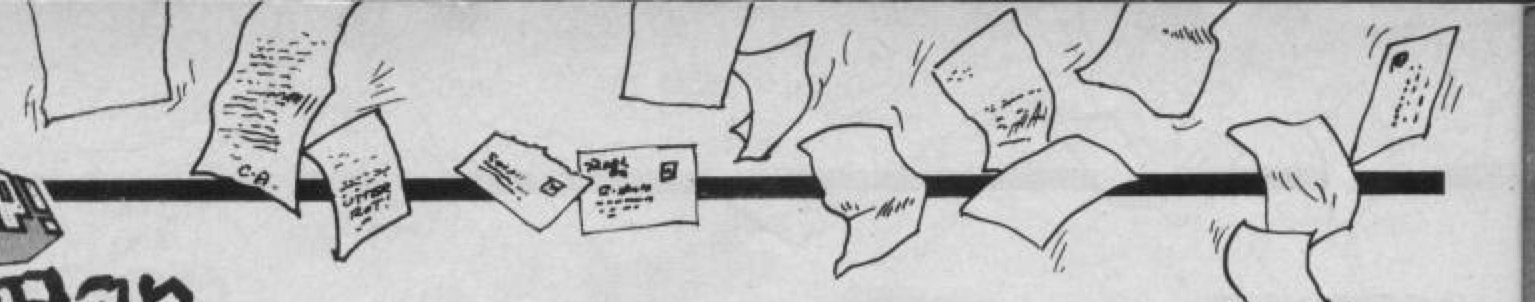
Answers: Arcade versions — YES to Paper Boy, Ghosts N Goblins (both Elite Systems) and Green Beret (Imagine). More than one load — because they're cassette implementations of disk-based games and all the information can't be loaded into your computer at one go. No idea about a cassette version of Pinball Construction Set *yet. Okay?*
LM

PRICE AND RATINGS — WHERE?

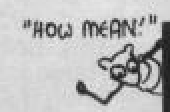
I wish to mention the lack of information (price, format etc) on the games *Phantasie* and *Germany 1985*! Please could you correct this and the lack of ratings on Activision's *Games Maker*

Also next time anyone at ZZAP! decides to murder a little person please, please MAKE SURE IT'S ROCKFORD . . .
Matthew Bennett, Hayling Island, Hampshire

As the strategy intro clearly stated in that issue, the SSI games to which you refer had not (and as far as I know, still have not) been priced or released. They were very early pre-reviews, hence the lack of price and therefore ratings. The Activision Game Maker piece was an article, not a review — also clearly indicated, because the Game Maker is not a piece of software you can review in the usual way, so there was felt to be no point.
LM



ZZAP! RRAP



A POPULAR POET YEARNS LONGINGLY

Dear Mortals,
I have decided that it is time to inform you of my decision. 'What decision is this you may ask yourself?' and cripes alive, make no mistake about it, I will let you ask this question.

These past few weeks I have been going through much emotional turmoil. Worry not though, as I have overcome my anguish. The reason for my stress is the mail I have been receiving lately. It has all been coming from magazines of your ilk and all of it carried the same message: 'We humbly beg that you will allow us to send to you, first class, some free software.'

You're probably thinking that you've missed out on this once in a lifetime chance to provide the People's Poet with free software.

Cheer up! You have not missed out. YES!! I — THE PEOPLE'S POET — have decided that you are the ones who are honoured to send me free software. Now you may ask yourself 'Woddy heck! why is he letting us send him free software?' Well this is the kind of entity that I am. In return for the software I will grant you a little bit of my wisdom:
Cans of deodorant can't sail — but then again nor can earwigs. By the way, a copy of *Mercenary* will be enough to still my wrath.

Enigmatically yours,
Neil Alexander (People's Poet), Cardiff

Oh wow! I feel so much more, what can I say? How can I sum it up in a few choice words? — but then, words are a barrier to pure cosmic thought, are they not? Mere cyphers of our real inner selves, ultimately betrayers of our consciousness and the purity of our aerosols. Blimey, guv, anyone can write garbage like this — and we should send you free software — try The Face.
LM

LUCASFILM LOVERS!

Dear ZZAP!
There is a question I would like to ask you, are you in love with Lucasfilm Games? Like I mean in the Christmas ZZAP! *Koronis Rift* and *Ballblazer* got very high marks. So I thought well I'll have to buy them, Luckily for me, my friend bought it. And when I played it I had a heart attack, is this the *Ballblazer* they reviewed in ZZAP!?

How could this game get 95% for graphics? How could this game get sound 78% 'NO WAY', I thought. 95% for graphics, there's hardly any graphics! and sound 78% oh! there's a fair tune at the start, but that's all there is! The other sounds are like an Amstrad with a malfunction.

Value for money 97%, £10 might sound cheap to you but then you get the games given to you! Now I'm not saying that the games are rubbish, but its only average. £1.99ers are better value, like *Kick Start* or *One man and his Droid*.

But what shocked me was the lastability rating on *Koronis Rift* 96%! I bought it up the local shop, and when I got home and played it, I got fed up with it in 20 minutes, it's just so boring!

You seem to rate Lucasfilm so highly! You seem to put down cheap games like the *Last V8* like in the review for it you said 'total unplayability', and I always thought your team of reviewers were good at games!

I've got back to base easily on that game, and it's addictive which is more than I can say for *Koronis Rift*! The only time I agreed with your reviewers was when JR said that he loved *Underwurlde*, I agree with him, it's a great game.

You've got a good mag, don't spoil it by overating games with the name Lucasfilm on them!
Christopher Wood, Hackney, London

Obviously a conflict of opinions here! I doubt very much whether being 'in love' with Lucasfilm has anything to do with, more that they happen to be good programs, and to everyone here, rather more than reasonable games. To say a game is totally unplayable, DOES NOT mean the reviewers necessarily found it hard to play — that's not the full meaning of the rating at all. Playability is also a function of enjoyability, and as a matter of fact, loads of budget games have been rated very highly, several being Sizzlers. It seems odd, to me, that you have hardly ever agreed with the reviews according to what you say, yet you think the mag is good. What appeals to you must lie elsewhere in ZZAP! then.
LM

ENDORSEMENTS ON ADS

Dear ZZAP! Rrap,
I'm writing to you on the controversial topic of manufacturers quoting magazines on their advertisements. Fair enough it helps sales of the game if people know it has been recommended by reputable magazines. Now don't get me wrong I am not criticising all of these kinds of adverts, only companies that quote from previewed copies of games, eg, US Gold's *Fight Night*, The Edge's *Wizardry*.

I mean surely the companies do not expect that magazines will do proper reviews on unfinished products (and would probably complain if you did do a proper review on an uncompleted game), and then say that they treat the magazines with the same respect that they expect from the magazines?

If this letter gets printed, I hope that some software companies will take some notice.
Craig O' Mahony, Northfield, Birmingham

If you are suggesting that advertisement endorsements from ZZAP! have been taken from the result of seeing unfinished games, then I can say, Craig, that this is almost never the case. The two examples you cite are fair, however. In the case of Fight Night, *we had a copy for review purposes for a long while, but did not fully review it because it wasn't strictly finished. But the degree to which it wasn't was minimal. As a result the review was virtually written although we held it back for a couple of issues until we could be sure we had seen a properly finished copy. Nevertheless,, any changes being made had nothing to do with the well-completed graphics — about which the ad quotes ZZAP!*

Wizardry *is a different matter — the quote used there came from John Minson, our London correspondent, and was based on comments he made in his preview piece. As you undoubtedly know, the reviewers in Ludlow didn't agree. I can't, of course, speak for the ethics of other publications.*
LM

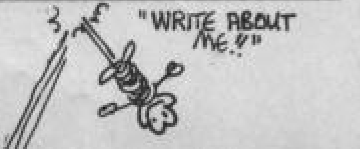
WHY THE COPIERS?

Dear ZZAP!
I was browsing intently through your Hyperactively, Ultra amazing inconceivably, quite good mag, when I found 2 adverts for utilities which sound as though they are made to copy games. The two adverts in question were on page 13 and 14 of issue number 11. (March issue).

The first of which is the 'Freeze Frame' which allows you to save copies with pokes in, and then there is the SUPERKLONE which makes copies 'better quality than originals' I thought you were trying to stop piracy but it looks as though by advertising copying devices you are trying to help increase copying. While making money for advertising you are losing money for the software companies, please ZZAP! think twice about your advertisements as I, and people like me have to pay good money for games where pirates are copying them for nothing. I would be appreciative if you would publish this and show that you do know what these copying groups are exploiting and that you will stop advertising this copier trash.
SpuddyWuddy! Brighton

This is a letter I have received endless times over in CRASH, and I suppose the answer remains the same. At present, while it's illegal to make copy of nay copyrighted material for lending, rehiring, reselling or making public in any way, it isn't illegal to make back-up copies — a process so common to most serious users of computers that it is as natural as breathing. Equally, it is perfectly legal to advertise utilities that allow back-ups to made, and SUPERKLONE even goes as far as to print a warning in its copy. The FREEZE FRAME utility also allows back-ups to be made to disk from tape, something that is extremely useful for disk owners who want to access their programs more speedily or even compact several games if there's room. As a magazine we can only apply moral pressure to prevent piracy — it's up to all of us, you included, to do something practical about it whenever piracy is uncovered.
LM

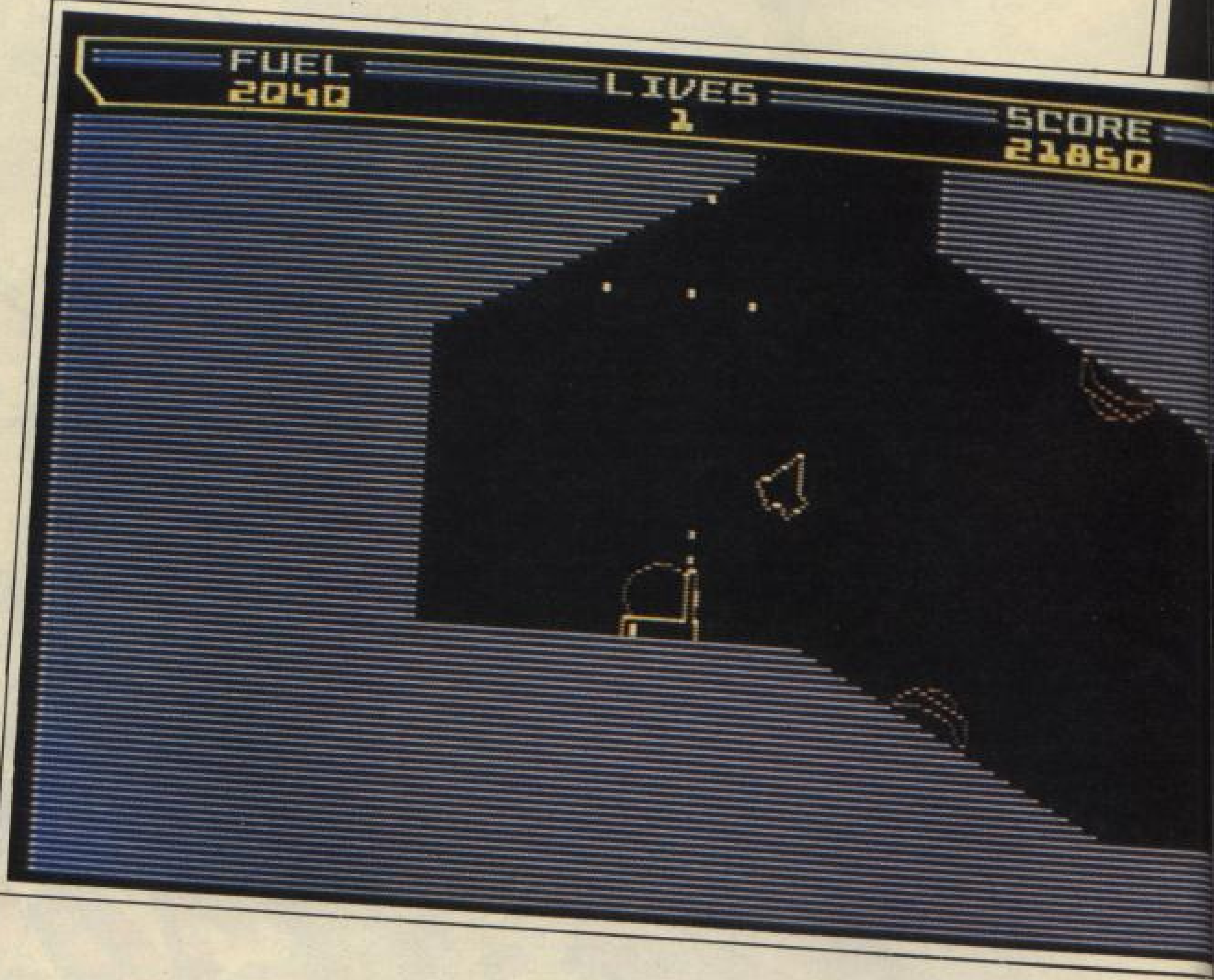
And with that very final point, we come, once again, to the end of yet another ZZAP! Rrap. Moans, complaints, grizzles — send them to another mag — praise, adulation, fan mail — the address hasn't changed at all: ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. The ball is in your court!
LM




DO YOU WANT TO BE A HERO?
Biggles
The result of unique co-operation between three ace software developers and the Biggles film production company, Biggles – The Untold Story will knock you right out of the air! It's a multi-part arcade strategy game in which each part must be completed to reach your final goal.
In the air, on the rooftops, on the ground, or in the trenches
YOU CAN BE A HERO!
Coming in May
Commodore 64 £9.95 tape, £12.95 disk
Spectrum 48K £9.95 tape
Coming in June
Amstrad CPC £9.95 tape, £14.95 disk
MIRRORSOFT
Purnell Book Centre, Paulton, Bristol BS18 5LQ

THRUST

Firebird, £1.99 cass, keyboard only

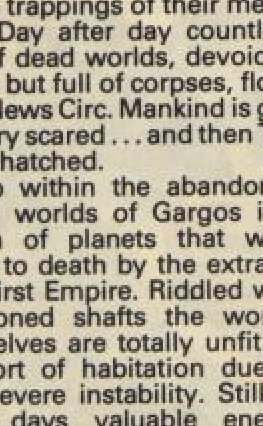


During the expansion years of the first Empire the future was bright, sparkling and hopeful. Mankind was in its foundling years, suckling on the still plentiful resources the universe had to offer. Planets were mined for their ore content, stars tapped of their mighty energy and the humans proliferated at a horrendous rate, easing themselves into every corner of the cosmos.

But that was a long time ago and now, as the universe itself is becoming old and decrepit, energy to feed the hungry mouth of man is becoming harder and harder to find. Atrophy and entropy are the rules of the day and hungry aliens steal the energy previously given. Mankind is getting scared...

After a millennia of a technologically based way of life, evolution has seen to it that the human race can't survive without the trappings of their mechanics. Day after day countless tales of dead worlds, devoid of energy but full of corpses, flood in via News Circ. Mankind is getting very scared... and then The Plan is hatched.

Deep within the abandoned carbon worlds of Gargos is a system of planets that were mined to death by the extravagant First Empire. Riddled with abandoned shafts the worlds themselves are totally unfit for any sort of habitation due to their severe instability. Still, in those days valuable energy sources were treated with a



Despite simplistic graphics and sound effects Thrust is a brilliant game and the best budget title I have yet seen. The Rob Hubbard soundtrack, however, is boring but does contain a few nice bits and thankfully only makes an entrance on the title screen. Thrust is virtually flawless and it's a steal at only two quid, in fact the loading screen alone is almost worth that as it is that good.





ZZAP! TEST



At last!! A version of Gravitar *which plays just as well as the original. Although not being a totally faithful copy* Thrust *adds its own elements and comes up with one of the most addictive and playable arcade games I've played in a long time. OK, so the graphics are very basic and the sound isn't amazing, but who really cares when the game is as good as this? If you want a brilliant game at a very low price then beetle out and get this, you'll be at it all night.*



Upon loading I'm afraid that Thrust *just looks hopelessly dated — a throwback from the ancient days of computing. Still playing the game puts any reservations the graphics may have aroused far into the back of your mind.* Thrust *is immensely playable, mixing in with a fair amount of originality is a blend of certain elements from such arcade classics as* Gravitar *and* Asteroids*. It's just a great game to play.*

Also very impressive is the realistically simulated gravity, inertia and momentum. When the power pod is hooked onto the back end of the ship all its forces are taken totally into consideration. Though there are only six different screens the mixture of various elements (anti gravity and invisibility) means that this great little budget game should keep you hooked for ages. For the price there is no excuse to miss this slice of arcade action that will keep you glued to the keyboard until the wee hours of the morning.





blasé attitude that is now considered shocking. Within each of these worlds lie the machinery and energy sources of the original mining operations. The Plan is a stroke of genius.

There are huge amounts of power locked within each of these now defunct planets and it can be released by destroying each of them in turn. As an extra benefit there is also a power pod on each world that contains now very valuable power. Destroying a planet is easy: just blast to destruction the generator connected to the grid stabiliser holding the shaft-riddled planet together. To make such an operation feasible the energy expenditure in taking the much needed power source must be slight, so a corps of ex—navy fighters were assembled and each given a one man craft equipped with cannon, force field and lasleash. Fuel was carelessly left behind on the planets, and it can be collected. There are also armament systems, which are still operational, and for safety's sake they are best destroyed.

Having just been enlisted to work for the Planetbusting service, understandably enough the easy jobs are handed to you first. Your debut mission is the easiest since it's only a strip mined planet that needs to be destroyed. There is one armament primed and the generator and power pod are on the surface: no underground navigation is required. An in-ship scanner represents the outside world in an angular and simplistic way. A representation of your ship is constantly displayed in the middle of the scanner and as the ship moves off towards the boundary of the view, more planetary surface appears. Because of the scanner's simplistic interpretation of the real world everything is seen as a two dimensional side scene.

The ship supplied is a much advanced version of the famous standard issue craft used by meteor miners (see *Asteroids* for reference) and can spin through 360 degrees and thrust in all directions. Controlled via a keyboard interface, A and S rotates the ship and SHIFT activates the engines. The space bar brings the multi-purpose force field into action. This handy piece of equipment has three functions depending on the surroundings. When flying through mid air, booting the field into action puts a shielding bubble around your machine. Any bullets heading your way disintegrate upon hitting. Hovering over a fuel dump (handily marked FUEL) and letting the force flow, pulls fuel into your tanks. Once the dump is exhausted it disappears from the scanner. Finally, activating the shield whilst hovering over the power pod (a small round object on a pedestal) instantly connects the lasleash to the middle of the pod. Thrusting into the air pulls the pod from the pedestal, away from the ground. This is tricky though since the pod's weight and momentum also count and it's all too easy to plunge into the ground, spinning end over end after a bit if mis—applied thrusting. However whenever the shield is operative your fuel drains away at quite an alarming rate so use the equipment only when needed. No fuel and the claws of gravity pull you downward into the ground, there's nothing you can do.

To complete a mission perfectly both power pod and generator have to be destroyed: a hefty reward in points is thrown your way for this feat but returning to the Planetbuster Corps with just the pod means being sent to the next, harder, mission. Blowing up the generator is quite easy, though it gets tougher on later stages. It's well worth going after the extra bonus, using the cannon mounted on the ship's front end just blast about a dozen shots into the machine and the generator goes unstable and starts to flash. Only ten seconds are given to vacate before the planet explodes. Fly straight up and after a couple of seconds a warp will take you, and any cargo in tow, back to corps base. The next mission is then sent your way.

As things go on your job progressively gets harder and harder: the armaments get nastier and more numerous. If you leave a world without totally finishing a mission then the subetha equipment is able to contact the next planet you travel to, warning the defence systems of your imminent arrival. The welcome you receive is not nice, all guns within the caverns are now ablaze and a lot of shield use is necessary. There are six types of world and after completing the six, an arduous task to say the least, they repeat but with added difficulty. The first extra hazard encountered on the seventh sheet is reverse gravity. After six sheets of a normal environment, such a weird thing as inverse gravity can really freak a pilot out, it's all too easy to crash hopelessly. The strangest effect is that the power pod now balloons upwards as soon as it is wire-leashed to the ship. On the fifteenth sheet the landscape is totally invisible except for when the ship's shield is activated.

Presentation 88%
Handy little demo mode and high score table, but no joystick option.

Graphics 80%
Though somewhat dated looking, movement is the main graphic attraction.

Sound 80%
Rob 'I get everywhere' Hubbard supplied the annoying main screen ditty, but befitting FX make up for this.

Hookability 92%
A good Thrusting is great fun and it's all very easy to get into.

Lastability 94%
The very cleverly graded screens means that it will need a momentous amount of skill to stop *Thrust* from offering a challenge.

Value For Money 99%
Games of this quality just aren't usually offered for a ridiculously low price like this.

Overall 94%
Most enjoyable game we've played for ages and at the price you'd be silly to miss it.

ARK PANDORA

Rino Marketing, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

For those of you who have always dreamed of becoming the squeaky clean hero, the type in whose mouth Krona wouldn't melt, had better avoid *Ark Pandora* since it's not that type of game. If you're the sort who fancies being a murderous pirate, a man for himself and no one else, then *Ark Pandora* and you may well make perfect companions. The story flows like this: Society isn't that stupid and in their wisdom they've imprisoned you, the pirate, on a fantasy island where you can do no harm. Chopping peoples' heads off, capturing other peoples' treasure and shouting rude



This is quite a jolly little arcade adventure which contains enough original features to make it stand out from the crowd. The graphics are all big and jolly, and although sometimes rather slow add atmosphere to the game. The soundtrack is also very attractive and suits the game nicely. The whole is presented nicely and the icon system is easy to use. If you're after a more unusual action adventure then take a look at this — you could well like it.

words in honour of the skull and crossbones may all be jolly good fun but it's a bit anti—social — hence your remote prison island pennance and you're stuck there till you draw your last breath. Well you would have been had it not been for the evil cult that suddenly sprung up over night. The villagers are now a most scared bunch indeed and since none of them are particularly used to fighting and things like that they turn to you, offering freedom if the island is rid of the demonic religion. A non too easy task since brains as well as a fair amount of brawn is needed.

Fred the pirate is an athletic sort of cove who can at the drop of a key leap into the air: handy for the avoidance of any floorbound creatures that might be encountered. Fred also has the amazing ability to run left and right at a fair furious pace. That's at the top half of the screen, though, where Fred is shown in his full two dimensional glory as well as a slice of the surrounding scenery. Underneath the graphical bit are a number of icons for more subtle manipulation of Fred. *Ark Pandora* is an adventure, and a graphical one at that and the six icons along the lower half allow access to many of the commands found within many text adventures. To toggle between control of Fred at the top and icon control at the bottom you hold down the fire button and pull down on the joystick. An arrow is at your commnand and when placed over an icon and activated the little sprite bursts into life and issues a window. The six commamds are as follows: Look, Inventory, Drop, Use, Take, Save/Load and Quit.

When controlling Fred at the top of the screen the joystick lets the pirate go left, right and jump, fire uses the object currently icon selected. There are a lot of objects to be found but only a limited amount may be carried at any given time. Using this control method Fred can only be moved in the scene currently occupied and flipping to the next screen is done by using movement icons — under the graphic display up to four arrows indicate possible exits, position the pirate over one of these and it's possible to exit in that direction.

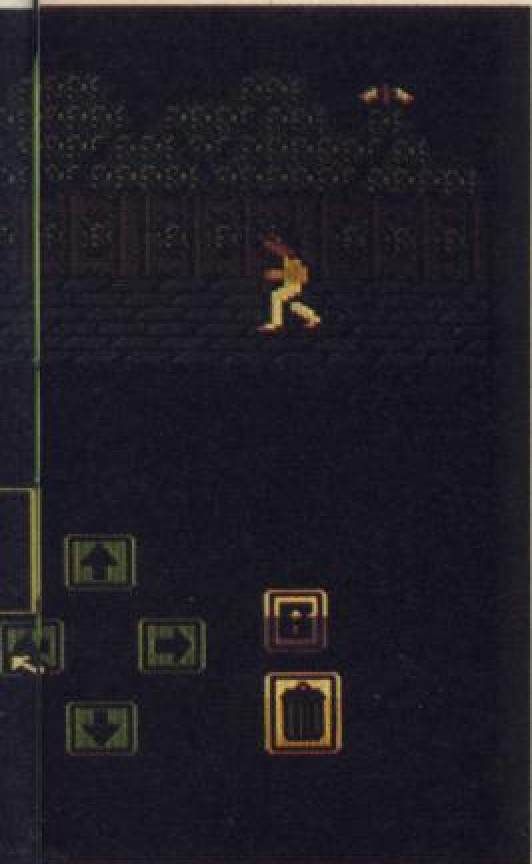
There are goodies and baddies on the island, animals are usually good bets to avoid since walking into them depletes valuable energy. This life force is constantly displayed and if it hits zero then you're dead. To fight the baddies there is a sharpened star which can be collected and then thrown at them. This cau-



I think Ark Pandora is a very nice arcade adventure, with pretty graphics and music, and I enjoyed playing it a lot. The icons are very simple to use, and although the pace is slow, they give the game speed. Being able to design screens with the screen designer supplied, is a nice touch. Overall, this is one of the more unusual arcade adventures to be released, and is certainly one of the nicest.









ses them to explode and, not unsurprisingly, renders them quite harmless.

To complete *Ark Pandora* a lot of the usual adventure type stuff has to be done, ie rescue people, use objects and kill the nasties. Apparently the path to freedom is quite tricky and Rino know it. Quite nicely the cassette inlay explains that if after a few months *AP* is still eluding a solution then a stamped addressed envelope sent to them will guarantee an answer sheet. Can't say fairer than that.



Though quite a nice concept I must admit to not having gone wild about Ark Pandora. *Then again I can hardly claim that arcade adventures are exactly my cup of tea. Still if you do like arcade adventures and are not adverse to the odd bit of action this could be just right. An impressive feature in* Ark Pandora *is the soundtrack which rambles in quite nicely with the main game. Also handy is the screen editing facilities making the game quite a bit more versatile. As I said I don't really like this type of game though it seems a fairly competent attempt at this genre.*

Presentation 79%
Quite usable icon system though nothing earth-shattering.

Graphics 81%
The backdrops aren't amazing but the game seems to be animationally above average.

Sound 89%
Boppy and varied theme tune that mixes quite pleasantly with the game action.

Hookability 76%
The pleasant presentation is fairly captivating and the icons easy to handle, making it immediately playable.

Lastability 77%
Depends on what you like, not a game for the alien zappers of this world though it should be fairly lastable for the adventurites.

Value For Money 79%
Little below what an average price now is though the game itself is average.

Overall 80%
Not an exceptional release though it could cause pleasure to fans of this genre.

TEST

PSI 5 TRADING COMPANY

US Gold/Accolade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

The *Psi 5 Trading Company* is a 35th century firm of haulage contractors specializing in the transportation of live and dead freight. The player is put in the managerial role of Captain and has to monitor all functions of the space freighter as well as allocating task assignments to the five-strong crew. The game is either joystick or keyboard controlled and makes use of an icon system to guide the cargo ship from one side of the galaxy to the other.

Travelling the spaceways is a hazardous occupation and there are all sorts of nasty characters just dying to get their alien manipulative organs on your lovely cargo! Needless to say these have to be disposed of, because if your cargo gets either stolen, lost or destroyed you end up with a rather large invoice which immediately puts you out of business.

When first loaded the player has to select one of three cargos (each has a different value) and plot a course through the Parvin Frontier (a pretty mean part of the Universe) to the destination planet. Once those factors have been sorted out a crew must be chosen from thirty potential candidates, who are a pretty varied lot and come from all walks of life — or in some cases, trundles of physical presence as there are a few robot applicants. There are six beings to choose from for each position (**navigation, weaponry, engineering, repair** and **scanning**) and as Captain you can access the personal documents of each. The documents give information about the candidate's age, race, qualifications, education, experience, strengths and weaknesses, and using this data it is up to you to choose the crew best suited for the task.

Play commences with the screen in communications mode. Split into five main sections, the display shows a view of space (either forwards, backwards, port or starboard), a graphic representation of the crew member with whom you're interacting, the ship's status console (showing weapons, motion, speed and pending messages), an information console and an selection of icons. The latter displays incoming messages from both external and internal sources and gives a detailed readout of the status functions of any crew member.

The main commands initially available are: **ack**nowledge, **weapons**, **scan**, **navigation**, **engineer**, **repair** and **manual**. Moving the joystick either left or right highlights one of the icons, and pressing fire button activates it. If, for example, the weapons icon is chosen then the relevant crew member is shown in the interaction monitor, and the information console changes to display the functions of the weapons department — **status**, **display**, **?**, **cancel**, **rank**, **fire** and **return**. Accessing status results in a readout of the number of shots fired and spacecraft destroyed, whilst display shows the orders given to the weapons section. Any incoming messages can be viewed by accessing the ? icon, and scan gives details of any alien craft, such as whether they are friendly or not. All firing orders are given using the cancel, rank and fire icons.

If you want to issue orders, or check up on another department, then the return command takes you back to the main screen, allowing you to select another icon. The screen then changes to display the crew member and their surroundings, and a new set of relevant icons.

Each department has their own special skill, and plays an important part in the game. Weapons and scanning work in conjunction with scan to identify and keep track of other vehicles

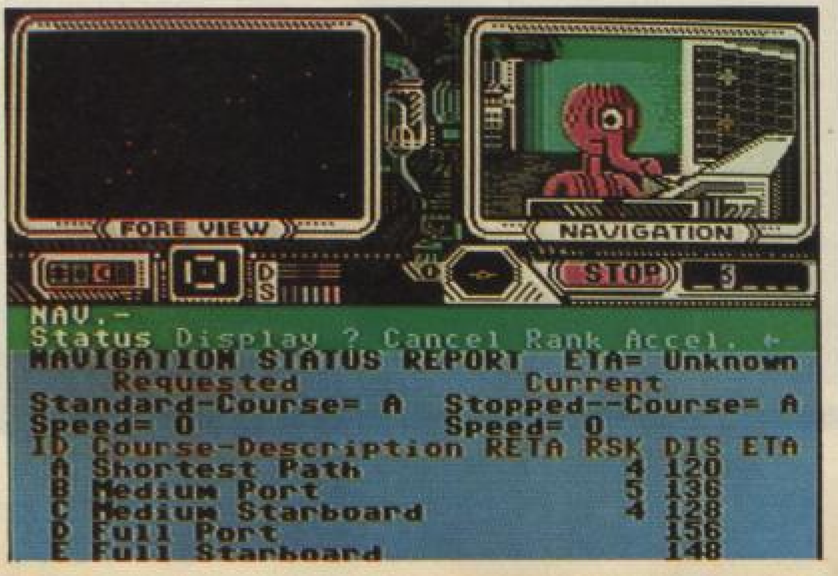


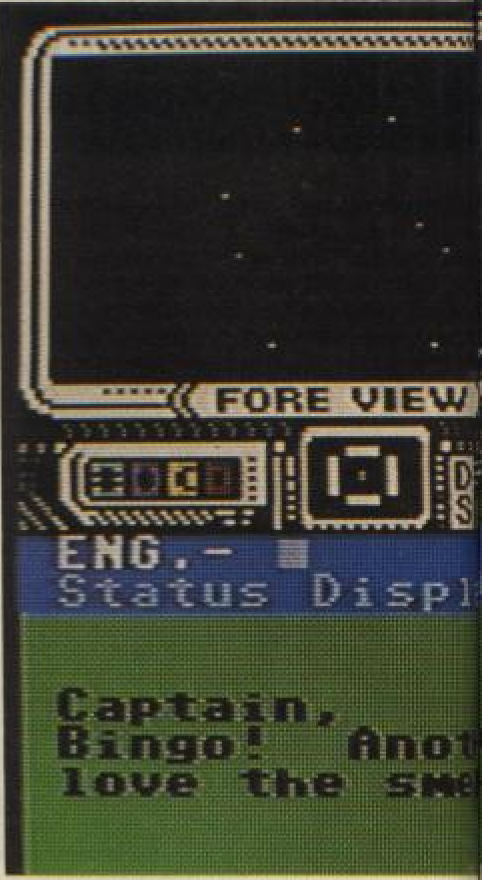
Psi 5 *doesn't contain any fast arcade action, but the pace is certainly quick enough and it is one of the best variations on the trading game theme I have played for a long time. Graphically,* Psi 5 *is impressive — each of the characters is of cartoon quality and very well animated. Although the pieces of music played throughout the game aren't amazing, they are good enough to generate an atmosphere and don't annoy to any great extent. All in all, a competent release, although I think it will have a minority appeal.*



Psi 5 *would be nice if it wasn't for the fact that it was originally a disk based product. US Gold's ridiculous insistence to put disk orientated product onto cassette is annoying, as it just doesn't work. All too often the occasional stops and starts interfere with what was originally quite a pleasant product. Computer/person interface problems aside,* Psi 5 *is alright, though a little slow at times. It isn't the sort of game that I would recommend for arcade junkies, but anyone into putting a bit of thought behind their joystick manipulations may well welcome this release. As is the case with previous Accolade titles,* Psi 5 *combines pleasant background ditties with impressive use of hi-res graphics. I wasn't overly impressed with this game, though quite a few people may well be. Check it out.*

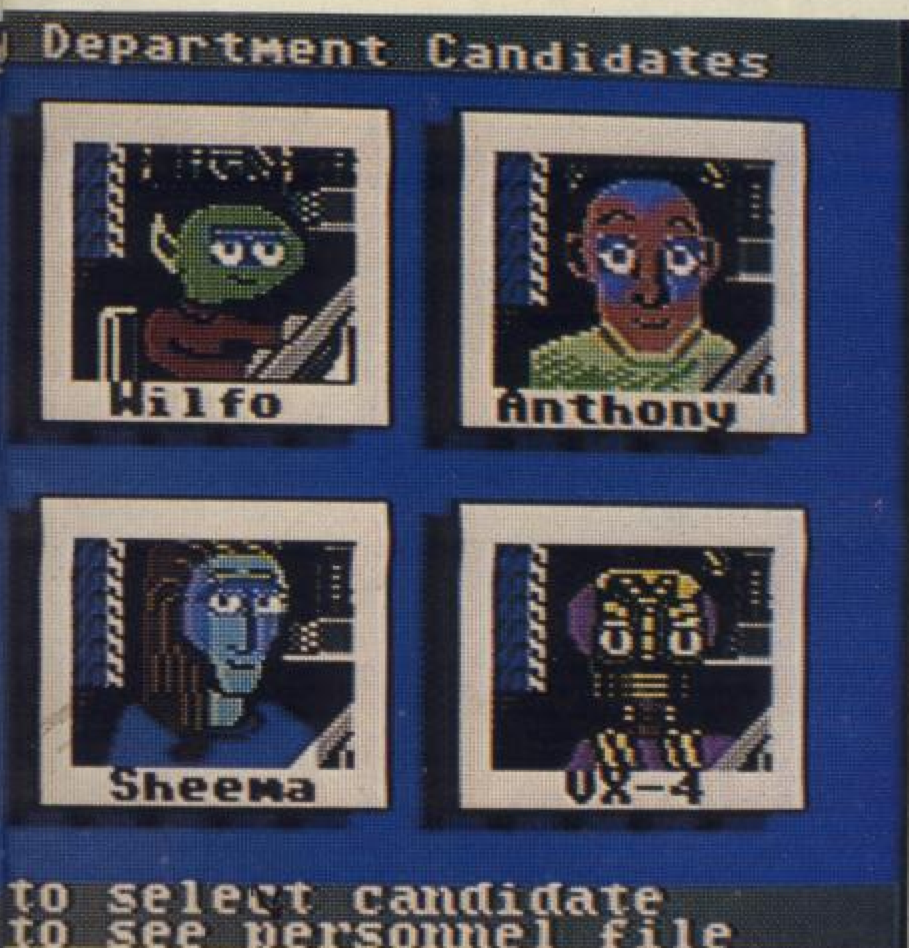












in space. Weapons can then dispose of anything hostile if necessary. Navigation controls the speed and course of the spaceship, and these factors can be altered during flight. For example, evasive manoeuvres are occasionally required to avoid any confrontation with renegade spacecraft.

The engineering department is responsible for managing and allocating power to different sections of the spacecraft — vital when under attack, as extra power has to be pumped into the defence shields. The repairs department consists of a team of robodroids which can be allocated to repair various sections of the ship.

As acting Captain you have the responsibility of making sure that all departments work together as a team, rather than seperate entities. If too much time is spent interacting with only one crew member, the rest of the team get bored and start doing their own thing, so the whole system swiftly begins to break down, and the spaceship doesn't function efficiently. Monitoring umpteen ship functions at once may sound like a tricky task, but as long as you ensure that all incoming messages from crew members are noted so you know exactly what's going on, and which orders should be given the biggest priority, it doesn't prove too much of a problem.



This is one of those games which requires a lot of perseverence before any sort of proficiency is gained. The amount of different things which have to be monitored is quite overwhelming initially, but reading the instructions and following the training mission helps considerably. The game looks really great, and all the different members of the crew are given character and personality by colourful and extremely well animated graphics. There's plenty of depth to the game too, with loads of things to keep the player busy for hours. If you're interested then take a look — it's a very original game, although it might not appeal to arcade game players.

Presentation 81%
Well documented and attractively presented, but cassette loading is a pain.

Graphics 90%
Cartoon quality characters which are superbly animated.

Sound 74%
Variety of above average tunes help the game along adequately.

Hookability 88%
Initially enthralling and easy to get into.

Lastability 87%
Enough variety and depth to keep traders happy for a long while.

Value For Money 83%
Would benefit from being a bit cheaper.

Overall 88%
A great variation on the trading game theme.


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Based on a concept by
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and story by Robin Waterfield
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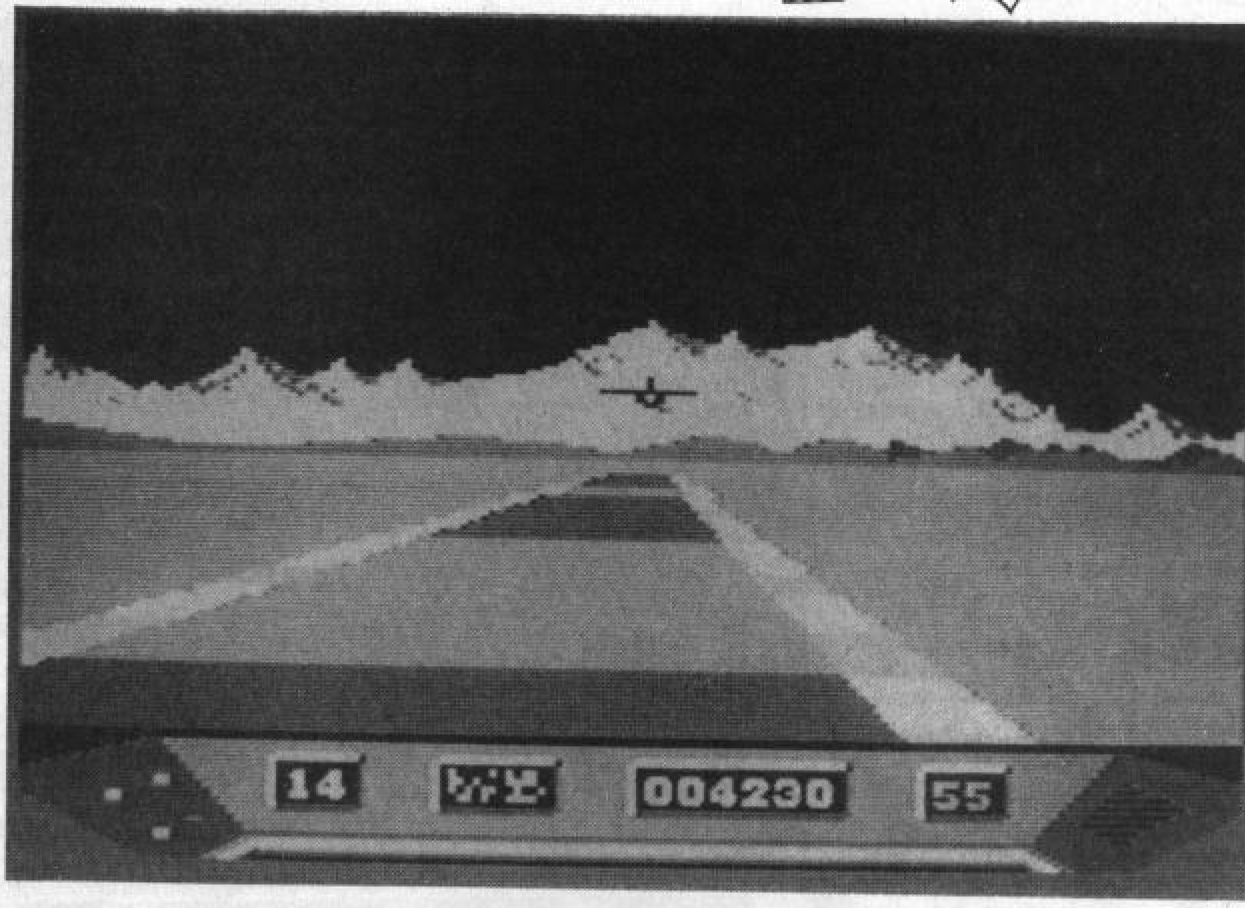
"ELECTRA GLIDE — OOOPS!" 

TEST

An *Elektra Glide* is actually a type of Harley Davidson motorbike, but far from being a motorbike simulation this is a pretty speedy racing game. It's played in true 3D style with the road viewed through the windscreen of the *Elektra Glide* craft. The craft's control console takes up the bottom of the screen and displays the speed, score and time remaining.

The object of the game is a very basic one — all the player has to do is whizz around the course before the time limit runs out. If you manage to get round the course before the limit is exceeded then you're given extra time on the next course to be tackled. Each course follows on from the other, so once the player starts racing there's no break.

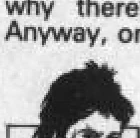
The game has three different courses; Britain, America and Australia which can be selected on the title screen. The other option is the choice of three types of steering control envelopes. Each gives a different sensitivity and thus suits different types of joysticks.



ELEKTRA GLIDE

English Software, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

When the game starts you immediately think 'gosh, where's the landscape' — because there isn't any, only the road can be seen. Pushing the joystick forwards accelerates the racer through the void . . . and lo and behold! In fact the machine has been parked in a tunnel!! That's why there's no landscape!!! Anyway, once free of the darkened shroud of the tunnel you zoom into broad daylight. The landscape is pretty featureless apart mountain ranges on the horizon and the odd trees and signposts on the roadside.



I must admit to not being a great race games enthusiast which means I'm also not a great Elektra Glide *fan either. Even so after a quick hack through Britain I can see how racing enthusiasts might not get very enthused either. As an example of this sort of game* Elektra Glide *isn't really a decent representative. Glitchy is a fitting word to describe the graphics, they seem to have a mild case of Parkinson's disease. Hardly surprising considering the amount of raster splits down the screen. The colour scheme is none too inspired either, someone's been consulting their 'What Colours Clash Best' wallchart. The main gripe I have with* Elektra Glide *though is that it's so extremely boring, there's nothing that you have to actually achieve, you just need to survive. It's all too passive.*



I am starting to get bored with racing games and therefore anything less than superlative is unlikely to arouse the James Hunt in me. A couple of games of Elektra Glide *didn't induce any form of stimulation and turned out to be a non-event horizon for me due to a lack of things to do other than drive round a track (one I've seen a dozen times before in previous race game releases) avoiding a couple of poxy objects. Had there been a larger variety of hazards and maybe another couple of vehicles on the track, then* Elektra Glide *might have shown some promise. As it is, it's just plain dull.*

Elektra Glide is quite an unusual race game in the respect that you're the only car on the road — there are no other vehicles at all. What there is, though, are horrible, frightening, sinister 3D objects which try to thwart your racing progress. These take the form of spheres and cubes and are found dotted frequently around the course. The menacing spheres bounce along towards you in attempt to home into your craft and the cubes, on the other hand, are static. Both have to be dodged because if they hit the craft you stop and consequently time is lost.

Occasionally a rocket whizzes overhead, and a little bit further down the road drops a load of 'electrostatic columns' onto the road. These again have to be dodged (usually tricky, especially on a bend) and hitting them causes the craft to slow down.

Other features along the course are tunnels and forks. Tunnels whizz up in 3D and you're plunged into darkness as you go through (you can still see the road). Hitting the side makes the craft stop, and again time is lost. There are also forks in the road, usually right near the end of a course, which present the player with a choice: going left or right leads to separate courses.

Each country has a different course, and they also increase in difficulty, the American one being the hardest with hazards galore.



The packaging to this game is very misleading — they've got an Atari screen shot on the cover, and the graphics are a lot clearer then the Commodore version which are murky and unclear. The game itself is pretty dull — just like a very simple Pole Position. Once you've gone round the course a few times it soon gets boring dodging the same old objects, and the novelty of the excellent tunnels soon wears off too. If you want a good racing game then shop around, there are far more exhilarating and stimulating race games than this.

Presentation 70%
Three different tracks and steering envelopes, but generally unattractive in appearance apart from reasonable title screen.

Graphics 67%
Gaudy colours, ineffective perspective and 3D.

Sound 70%
Despite a great bass-line the tune can prove repetitive and tiresome.

Hookability 43%
Easy enough to get into, but very soon apparent . . .

Lastability 34%
. . . that there's not much to do.

Value For Money 35%
Too little for too much.

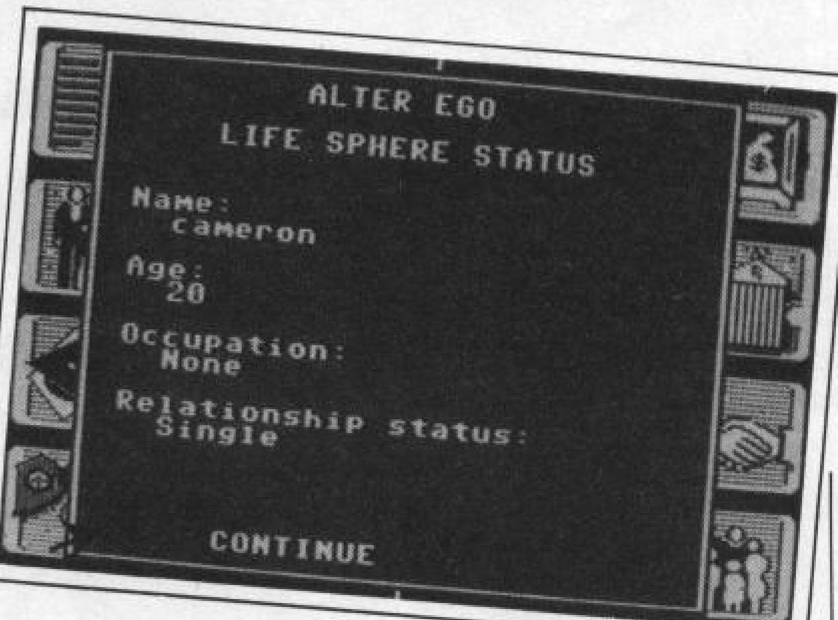
Overall 38%
Nothing racey about this race game.

ALTER EGO

MAY



Activision, £19.99, disk, joystick or keys



It looks as if our Cameraman, Cameron, is down on his luck . . .

What if . . . If you have ever wondered what would have happened if you had tried harder at school, had more confidence when dating, been more daring in your social life, then Activision have a product with some possible answers for you. Called *Alter Ego*, it's a three disk adventure/role playing game which takes you through the seven stages of life by means of icon driven decision making sections.

Initially, a character may be created by either the computer or yourself, by answering a series of questions such as, 'Do you think questions like this are a waste of time?' with TRUE and FALSE responses. If you allow the computer to answer the questions, an option to review and edit the responses is still available. The seven stages of life are Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, Young Adulthood, Adulthood, Middle Adulthood and Old Age. Any of these may be chosen as the starting point to the game and it is possible to play the same section more than once.

Initially there are two main icons on the screen. The first of these is accessed to display your main characteristics both physical and psychological. The second tells you your age. The rest of the screen is best described as a series of icons connected in flowchart fashion. These central icons are Emotional, Physical, Familial, Intellectual, Social and (later) Vocational. Selecting one of these icons enters you on a kind of multi-choice mini-adventure which, if successfully completed, increases your life score. These episodes open up from text windows appearing above the main screen. As the each of the episodes is played out, the flow chart may be scrolled down to reveal the next series of events.



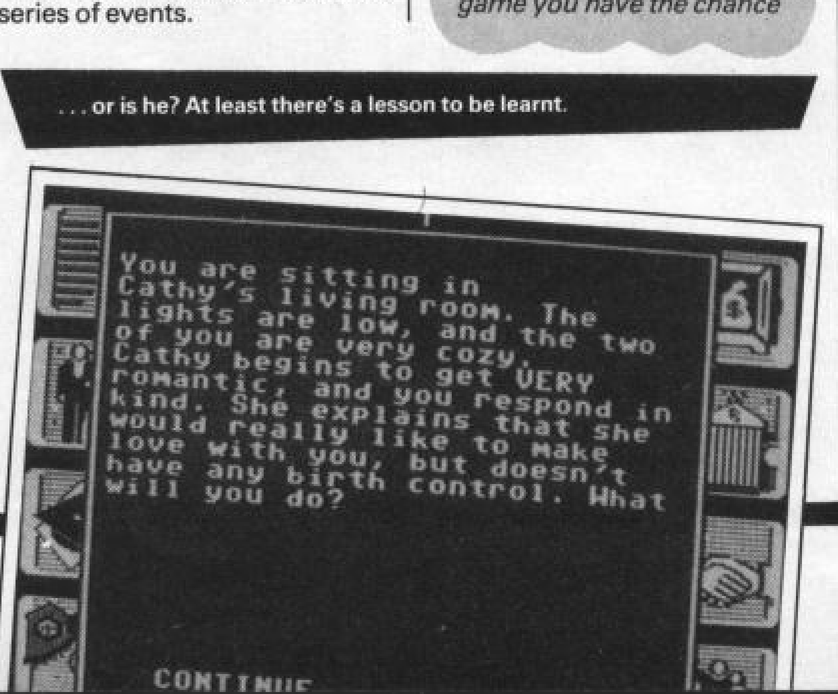
Activision have released some pretty innovative and original software in the past, but never have they released anything quite so stunningly original as Alter Ego. *It is a truly remarkable simulation of life itself, and proves just as enjoyable an experience as the the real thing, with a multitude of different situations to face as you see fit. It is one of the most addictive and compulsive games I have ever played (yes, that old cliche), mainly due to its voyeuristic and indifferent nature. There's not much more to be said, other than enjoy life to the full . . . With* Alter Ego!



From the very first keypress this game is addictive — really addictive! It's wonderfully written. The writer (an American psychologist) displays a great sense of humour and a surprisingly perceptive view of all the problems both the young and old face in their lives. Almost every situation has happened to you at some point. With this game you have the chance to answer back to teachers when you never had the guts to in real life — take risks that you sometimes chickened out of — and make decisions that you have not yet experienced for real.

As life goes on, play becomes realistically more complex and demanding. Frequent checks on your characteristics are necessary if a balanced character is to be developed. The result is a game that's original in nature and compulsive to play. It's neatly presented on the screen, it's challenging — it's excellent! Go out and buy it — worry about the consequences later!

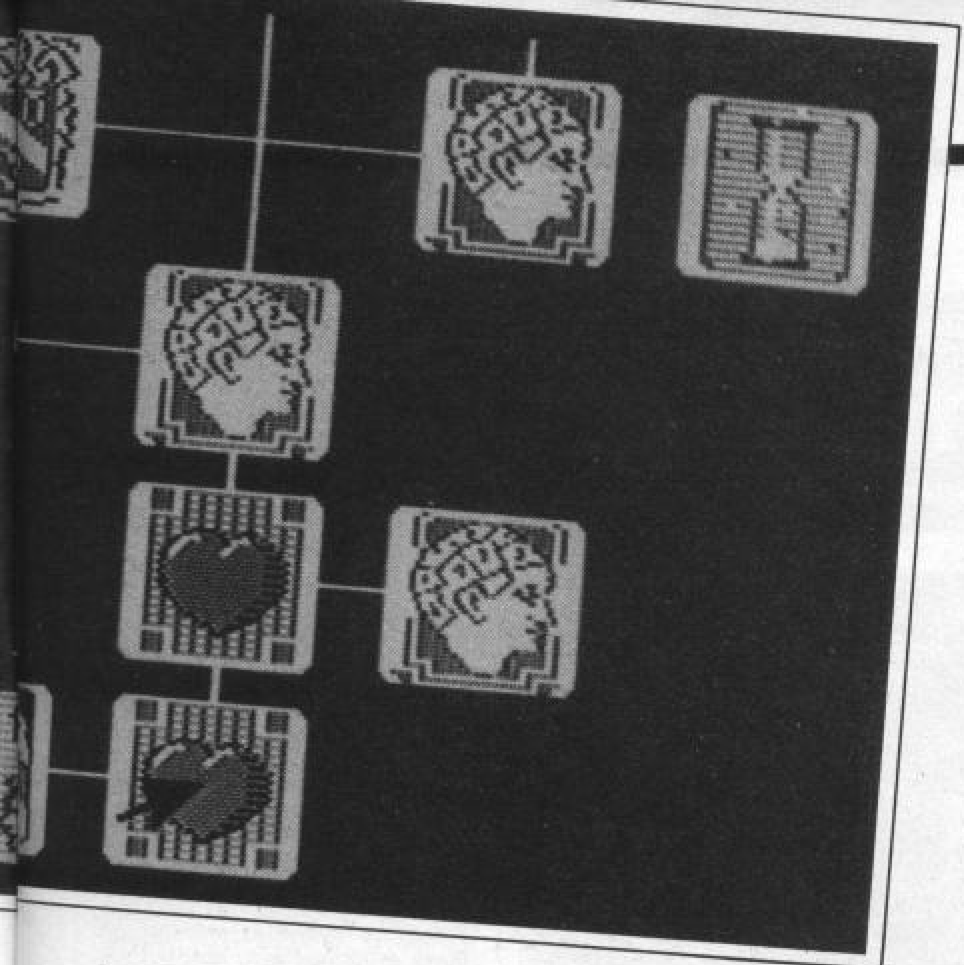
. . . or is he? At least there's a lesson to be learnt.





Playing the mini-episodes is the main part of the game. The choices available allow your character to develop in a wide variety of different ways. Later in life, the consequences of earlier actions will affect anything from what kind of job opportunities are open to you to getting a compatible partner for marriage (which is as suitable time as any to point out that whilst the version reviewed was 'male', Activision are preparing a female version). Normally the episodes take the form of a situation being presented where you are the central character. You then choose the mood for your character and then the action he or she performs. More choices may follow, depending on the situation. The conclusion usually hints strongly at how well you did and takes the opportunity to poke fun whenever possible.

When a section of the game has been finished, a 'narrator'



Infancy: not too much to cope with in the the early stages of life. Ah! Ignorance is bliss!

comments on your progress so far, offers some advice for the future and gives you the option of saving the current game, playing the section again or continuing into the next stage. Once adolescence is reached, more static icons appear on the screen. These consist of High School, Risks, Relationships and Work. They may be accessed more than once and remain on screen, despite the disappearance of the central icons. Paying too much attention (or too little) to any of these icons will affect you, no matter how well you do elsewhere. For instance, if you spend all your time dating instead of going to school, you are more likely to get somebody pregnant than passing your exams! On the other hand, do you really want to end up being the introverted, limp wimp . . . Of course, playing out the various mini-adventures properly is still essential to successful play.

Risk taking can improve self-confidence and intellect but because of the dangers involved with some of the activities, may also lead to death. If this section is chosen, the computer constantly asks whether you would rather stop or continue. Intellectual questions start becoming more of a general knowledge quiz. Unfortunately, the questions seem to be biassed towards the American player — however, Activision have kindly supplied a crib sheet so it is possible to answer questions about presidential protocol correctly!

As life goes on, more static icons appear dealing with College, Major Purchases, Marriage and Family (the one you help create rather than the one you came from). Life consequently becomes more complicated and difficult to co-ordinate. The game expects you to play in character and so indicates when it believes you have made a bad choice in an area. Also, if your action indicated an impulsive nature rather than a thoughtful one, you may find yourself rather short on resources from time to time as the computer assumes you splash out the cash without much concern for the consequences.

If at any point during an episode, you wish to backtrack through to a particular choice, the Review option at the top of the text screen allows you to do so. A game may be saved in the middle or at the end of one of the seven stages.

Whatever the public think of the game, one thing is almost for certain: it's going to stir up a lot of controversy. Throughout the instructions, there are reminders that this is only a game. Nevertheless, it tends to be quite educational and it doesn't consider any area to be a taboo subject. Everything from early sexual encounters and toilet training to complex social interaction and death is given equal treatment — all with a humourous sweetener. Even so, the option is given to flip past these sequences. Apparently, in the states, the game has gone on sale with an 'over sixteens only' label but the same caution is not to be applied to the English market. No doubt, a lot more will be heard about *Alter Ego* . . .



INCREDIBLE !!! The harmless looking packaging of Alter Ego *contains one of the most incredible programs I've ever seen — and played! Addictive's not the word for it — I sat down one Sunday afternoon and loaded up* Alter Ego *— goodbye Sunday night and most of Monday morning . . . The sort of problems that you encounter in real life are present in* Alter Ego, *and there are loads and loads of them — girlfriends, friends, Mummy and Daddy, fights, school, getting married/divorced, witty ones, dangerous ones, sexy ones, sad . . . Everything — the author's a genius!*

The sheer volume of text is also unbelievable, and the problems that crop up are taken from a pool making the game different each time it's played (obviously the same problems DO appear eventually). I can't recommend this program highly enough. If you've got a disk drive then beg, steal or borrow Alter Ego. *If you haven't, then beg, steal or borrow a disk drive too!*

Presentation 96%
Well produced, comprehensive instructions and excellent on-screen presentation.

Graphics N/A

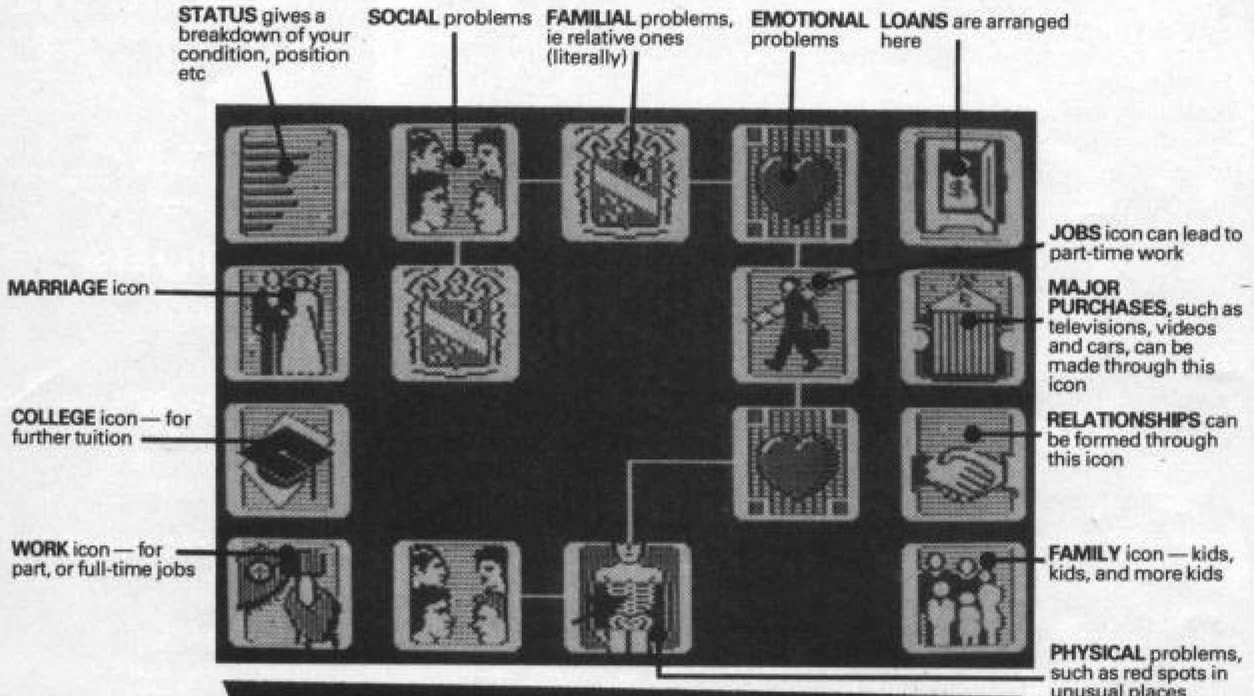
Sound N/A

Hookability 98%
An enjoyable doddle to get into and easy to use.

Lastability 97%
When you're bored of life, you'll be bored of *Alter Ego*.

Value For Money 91%
Well, it IS quite expensive, but your life over again, and again, and again? Given that you have the money to spend, then it's well worth it.

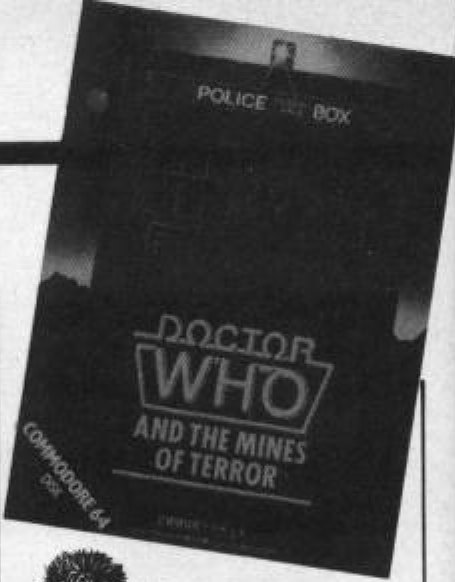
Overall 98%
Original, unusual, compelling, varied . . . C'est La Vie!

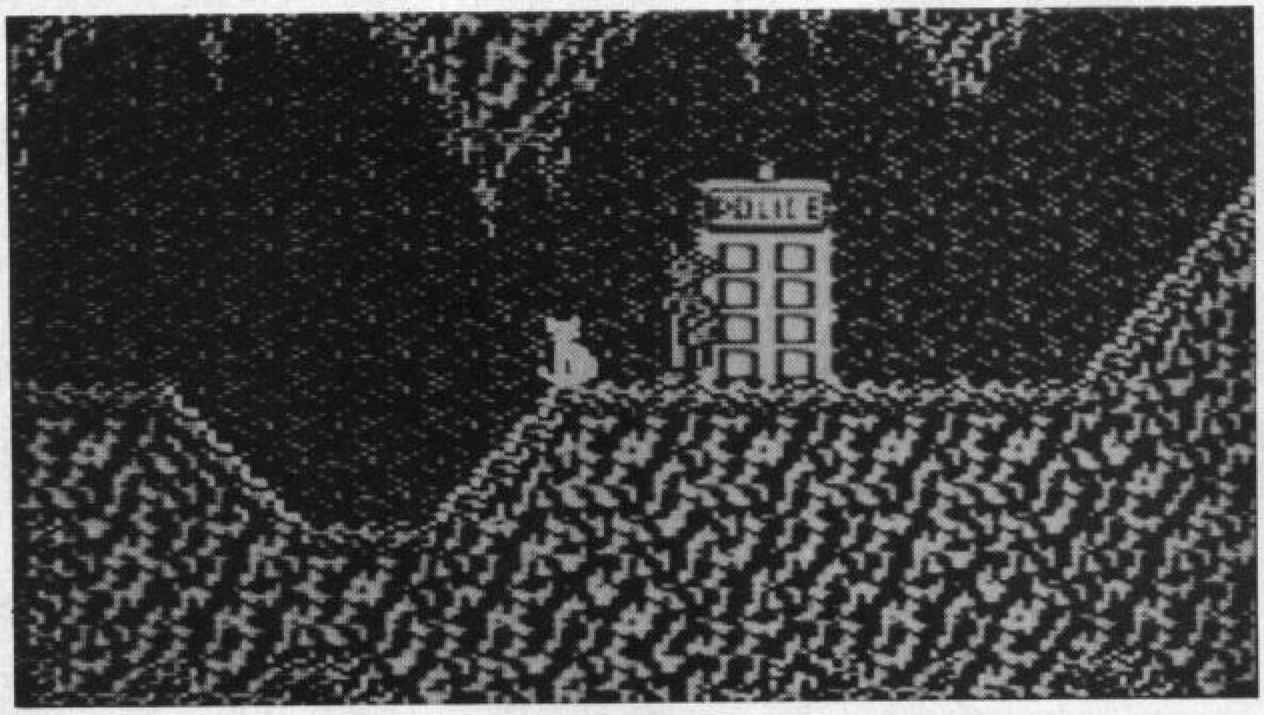


Young Adulthood: older — but more experienced?

DOCTOR WHO AND THE MINES OF TERROR

Micropower, £11.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys





After year upon year of wandering about in cold BBC TV studios, brandishing hacked up hair dryers against actors dressed up as megalomaniac mushrooms, Doctor Who is now a computer game from the Leeds software house Micropower.

As is usual the good Doctor is pitted against that well known baddie—in—the—street, The Master. The trouble is that this chap has managed to get his hands on the plans for the Timelord's TIRU device, a handy little bit of techno marvel that is the temporal equivalent of a video editor. Slices of time can be chopped from the continuum and altered allowing the future of the universe to be altered. Obviously if you are a megalomanic lunatic then the possibilities are endless and one possibility The Master wants to realise is to make himself immortal, setting himself up as the Devil at the beginning of time. This would be worth avoiding since it's better to stick to the devil you know.

The master has holed himself up in the *Mines of Terror* — not a nice place where Heatonite is mined. This mysterious compound is the secret raw ingredient needed to make a TIRU. The day needs saving and time itself needs someone who is used to saving days (and the universe): Doctor Who.

The whole game is a full graphic interpretation of an adventure with a large number of psychologically contortionate problems to be solved. Unhappily as emissary of the Timelords the Doctor isn't allowed to possess any weapons when he beams down to the mining complex on Rijar, not even the awesome sonic screwdriver. This leaves him a little defenceless should he come into mortal combat with any of the controllers that patrol the mines in search of intruders. These devices are quite dumb but if the Doctor ever comes close then they activate into raucous mash—up—the—civilian mode. The controllers' main disadvantage is that they can only travel along the metal walkways constructed for them.

The Doctor himself remains central within a scrolling window and can roam around in Son of Blagger style (up, down, left, right and jump) but can also collect and use various objects found around the huge map. Four objects can be held at any given time and these are shown at the top of the screen. Using the function keys, it's possible to manipulate the items.

Though there are no weapons supplied to you, a Splinx is. This weird creature looks exactly like a household moggy but is in fact a highly sophisticated robot that's immune to detection from any of the aliens. Pressing S takes you to a programming screen that allows a set of instructions to be set up and executed by the splinx. These are fairly simple but can enable the Doctor to get at items he normally wouldn't be able reach.

To complete the game the plan has to be retrieved from the lab and then returned to the Time Lords, not all easy since the map is absolutely huge. A fair bit of help is given via the packaging which includes a full blown, though not vary detailed, map of the mining complex.



I really like Doctor Who *quite a bit, despite its immediate awkwardness. It is very similar to* Castle Quest *on the BBC, one of my all time favourites, and it's nice to see something like that on the 64. The main appeal to the* Mines of Terror *is the depth of the game, beating most text adventures even. The graphics are of an average sort, though quite effective, and scrolling is very nice indeed. The only real gripe I have is the ubiquitous tune that migrainly rattles away while you play. Still there's always the TV set volume control. There are several nice ideas incorporated and one of them is the Splinx. Overall I really liked this game and I'd recommend any 64 owner to have a look at it.*



Although Doctor Who *doesn't look and sound too impressive, it is one of the best arcade adventures to appear on the 64. It does take time to get into, but once you do it proves enthralling and enjoyable to play. At first it looks like a scrolling platform game, which of course it is to a degree, but on playing you find that it's something more and the 'adventure' overtones give it that bit extra.* Doctor Who *does need to be played to be appreciated, since initial impressions are deceptive — some may even slag the game off because they haven't bothered to play it.*



Initially this game looks pretty grotty with its rather unimpressive graphics and less than impressive sound. On playing, however, it soon becomes apparent that there is a lot of depth to the game. The playing area is very large indeed and it'll certainly take quite a while before the map is explored to its full extent. The big niggle is the horrible music which burbles away throughout the game, although it does get better when the Doctor enters another section of the map. This is one of the better arcade adventures available for the 64, and if it's a long lasting game you're seeking then have a look at this.

Presentation 92%
Great giant size packaging with loads of interesting bumph, plus nice touches like Splinx programming.

Graphics 70%
Sprites are adequate, backgrounds equally so and could be better but excellent scrolling.

Sound 32%
Where's the famous tune? Not a drawback though, but the tunes supplied are.

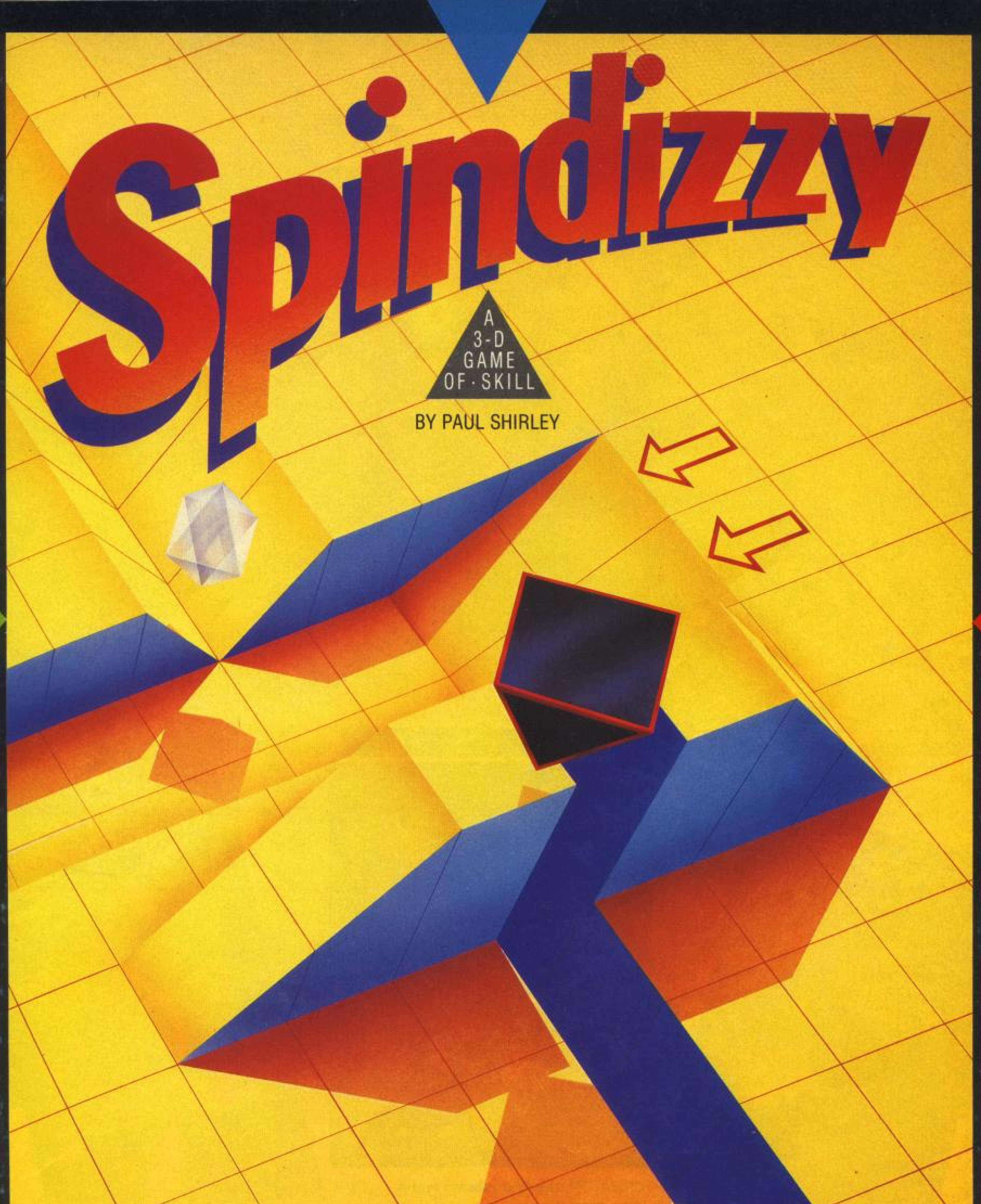
Hookability 81%
Requires perseverance and you must read the instructions.

Lastability 89%
Difficult but not frustrating and varied enough to maintain interest.

Value For Money 81%
Pricey but worth it.

Overall 86%
A very good 64 arcade adventure — timeless perhaps?





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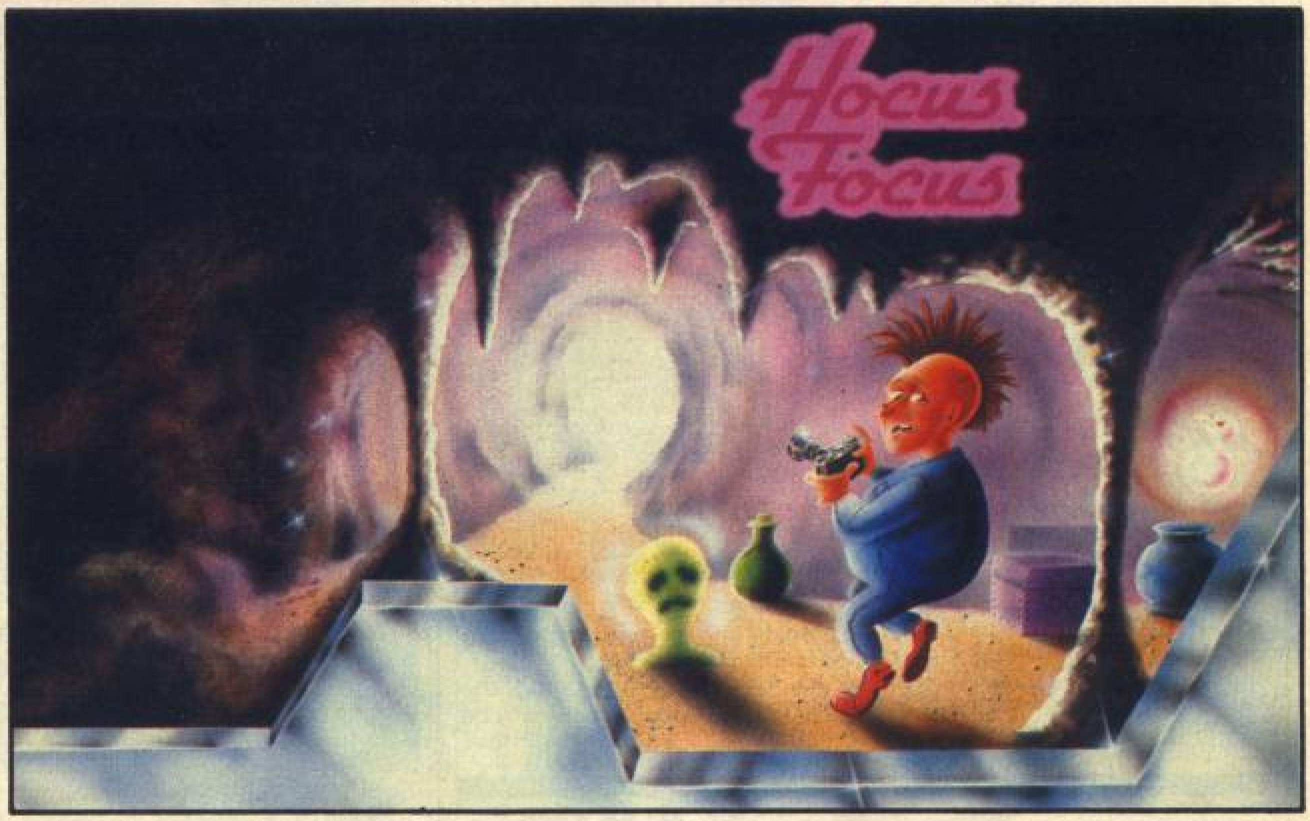
ON PAGE 3 MAX HEADROOM as you've never seen him before. The Shattering Truth about GLASS on the Amstrad. Famous Golfer Defects From Commodore and Spectrum.

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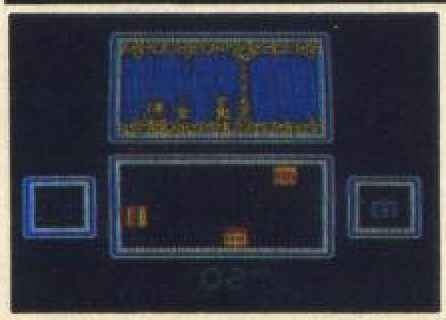
YTS BOY THWARTS POTTY PROFESSOR

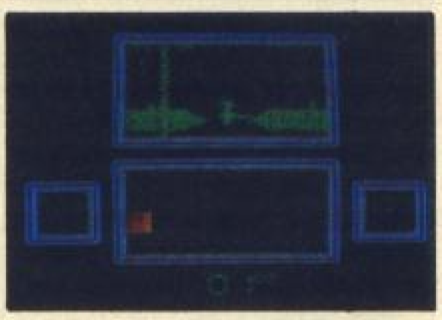
by Scoops McBoozer



The existence of a secret lab under Kew Gardens was discovered yesterday by Youth Trainee, Jeremy Windburn (17).

When congratulated on his coup he replied, "Oh Gosh! It was nothing." Windburn (16) is employed by the Shocker as a trainee photographer and this was his first assign ment. Breaching the security system he managed to capture photographs of the latest inventions from the manic mind of the jailed Professor Pillock. On his return Windburn (47) was rushed to hospital to be detoxified after braving the terrors of the radioactive underground lab. His girlfriend pouting blonde Amanda (19) said "What a hero."





QS SPILL THE BEANS

A spokesperson from Quicksilva today comfirmed rumours that they are about to release a game based on the exploits of the famous Jeremy Windburn. To be titled HOCUS FOCUS, this follows the exciting media coverage of his daring raid on the secret underground H.Q. of the notorious Potty Professor Pillock.

Selling at £8.95 this program will be available for the Commodore 64 and Spectrum. A source close to Windburn, rumoured to be Amanda (90) said "I'll have four of each".

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ZZAP! TEST

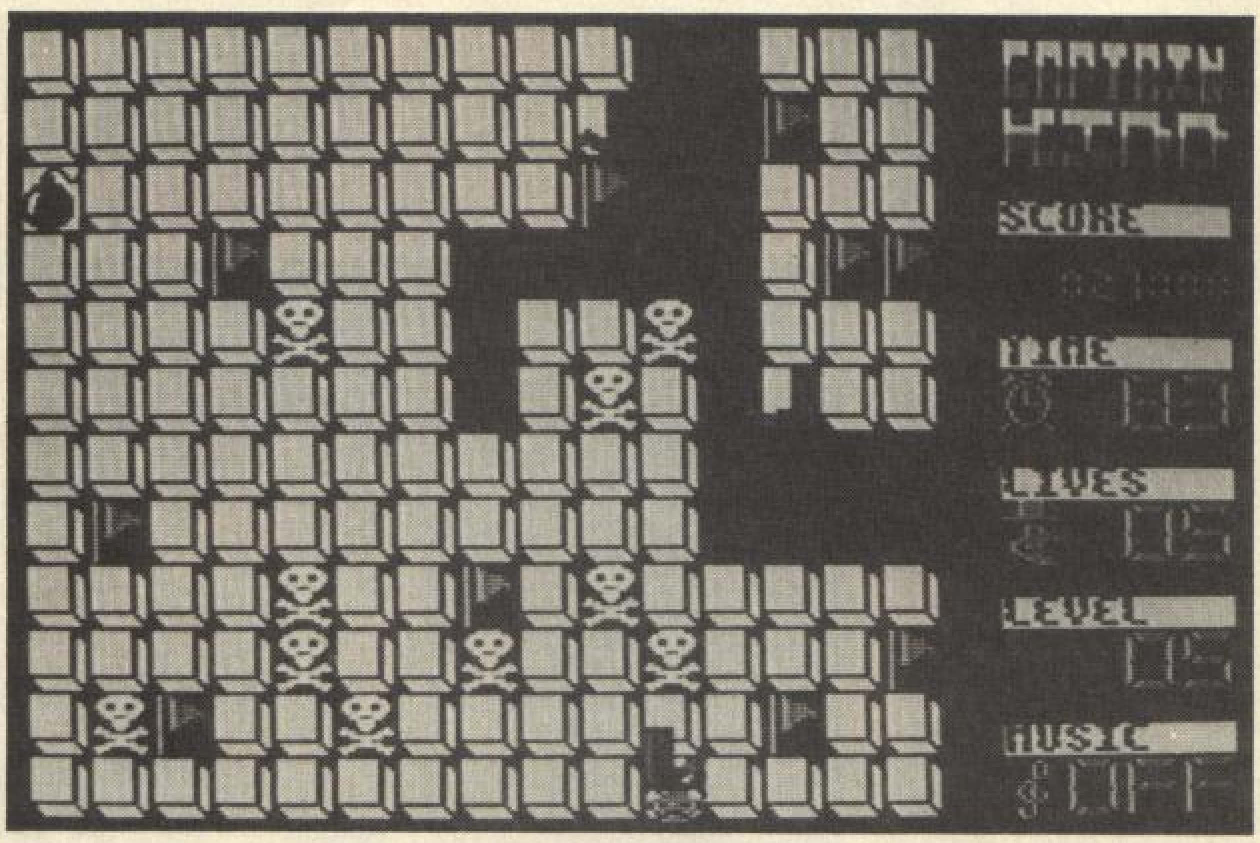
Captain Kidd is a bomb disposal expert, and living in a surreal land where bombs appear every few seconds he's a very busy little fellow. The game takes place on a grid made up of 15 x 12 squares and good ol' Cappy can move in all four directions around it. When the game starts a bomb appears somewhere on screen and a timer begins to tick away. What the Captain has to do is reach the bomb before the timer reaches zero and the bomb detonates. Once the bomb has been successfully dealt with another appears until all the bombs have been defused whereupon Cappy is moved on to another, more difficult screen

As Kidd moves around the grid he dissolves any square he lands on, and since he can move only on the squares and not in between, careful route planning round the screen is required. If he runs into trouble and isolates himself all is not lost. The row of squares he's sitting on can be scrolled left or right by keeping the fire button pressed and moving the joystick, but sometimes even this doesn't help. There are also harmless flags dotted around the screen which reap bonus points if run into.

Also occupying the grid are two breeds of nasties, skulls and boots. The skulls are static, occupy one square and are fatal if blundered into. The big problem they cause is when a row of squares is being scrolled — if the player isn't concentrating then it's easy to scroll them into the helpless Captain. The boots try to chase after the hero and crush him if they track him down. When the game starts the player is given five lives to play with, but extra ones are awarded at regular intervals.



I used to enjoy playing Sumlock's Grid Trap when it first appeared — but that was some time ago and on playing Capt'n Kidd, *which is a derivative of the aforementioned game, I didn't find the experience as enjoyable. The graphics are very simple and quite crude, as are sound effects and music, and the game itself. Not one of the best examples of budget software, and there is better available for less.*



CAPTAIN KIDD

Bug-Byte, £2.95 cass, Joystick only



This is a clone of the ancient arcade game Grid Trap *(or* Check Man *as it was alternatively named) which never really took off. Why Bug-Byte have decided to resurrect the title is a complete mystery — the sound is dated and the graphics very dull and uninteresting. Although it's fun to play for a few games there's no real variation in the screens apart from having to collect more bombs and avoid more nasties consequently the game soon palls. There are better games than this for a quid less.*

Presentation 82%
Five skill levels to choose and instructions on the title screen.

Graphics 37%
Little sprites which trundle about uninterestingly and boring screen layout.

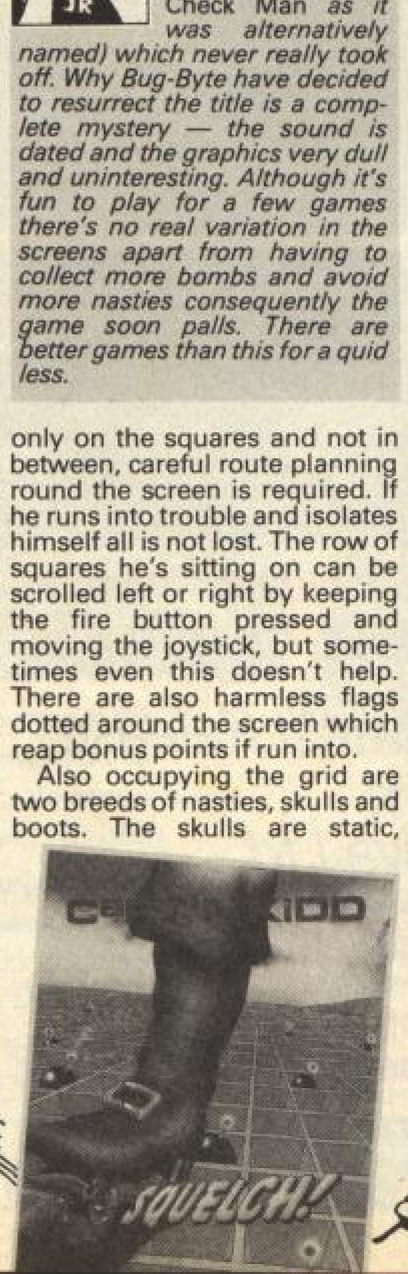
Sound 29%
A naff version of the Entertainer and crummy spot FX.

Hookability 43%
Simplistic gameplay means it's easy to get into.

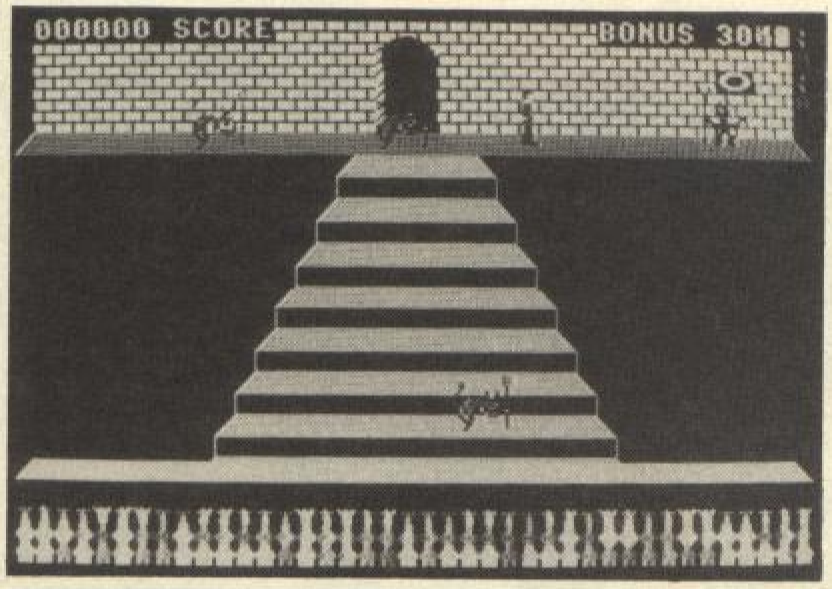
Lastability 31%
But subsequent screens give more of the same.

Value For Money 36%
Cheap, but dated.

Overall 32%
Just an ordinary conversion of a dated arcade game.







MR MEPHISTO

Bug-Byte, £2.95 cass, Joystick only

Evil, nasty and horrible. That's what Mr Mephisto is. You see, in this game you're trying to make your way to the final resting room of life (heaven to you). Now you'd think that would be nice and easy, but it isn't. No whizzily growing wings, loafing about on clouds, strumming your harp and giving the halo an occasional buff, oh no. Getting to heaven is a tricky job.

What you have to do is guide your little man from the bottom of the screen up the stairs in the centre to the top right hand corner where a halo resides. If he picks it up then a door at the top of the stairs flashes and he can go through to the next screen.



Mr Mephisto *looks like the sort of game that was out and about several years ago. Apart from having terribly simplistic gameplay (dodge the nasties and collect the object sort of thing), the graphics are awful. The main sprite looks like it's been brought up on low-cal soup all its life, and the demon sprites are like demented hunch-back cripples on the rampage with pitchforks. Achieving the tasks set down is very difficult because the character moves so slowly and the stairs are so thin, and consequently it soon becomes totally frustrating. If you want a good cheapo game then look around, as there are a lot better than this.*

Now that all sounds easy, but it isn't. Mr Mephisto's minions are a'trolling around the stairs and one touch from them means death, so avoiding them is paramount. On later screens Mr Mephisto has been really mean and built several exits with several flights of stairs to each, but only one is the safe way out, so choose correctly or die. Invisible staircases make appearances later on and eventually on the final screen old Nick makes a guest appearance. If you manage to ring the bell on this screen then the good old pearly gates will open and you'll finally make it to heaven and live happily ever after.



Mr Mephisto *is quite an old game, and it certainly shows. Despite the budget price, it isn't budget quality and I wouldn't consider it a worth-while investment. The graphics and sound aren't too hot (although the subject matter is!), and the game itself is lacking in variety. It is also frustrating, and consequently it isn't much fun to play.*

Presentation 72%
Different skill options and the game can be played at several sppeds.

Graphics 29%
Dated, undernourished sprites and boring backgrounds.

Sound 38%
Dull, unimaginative title tune and spot FX.

Hookability 23%
The boring gameplay and difficulty of the game soon gives way to frustration.

Lastability 20%
Only six screens of boring action . . . yawn!

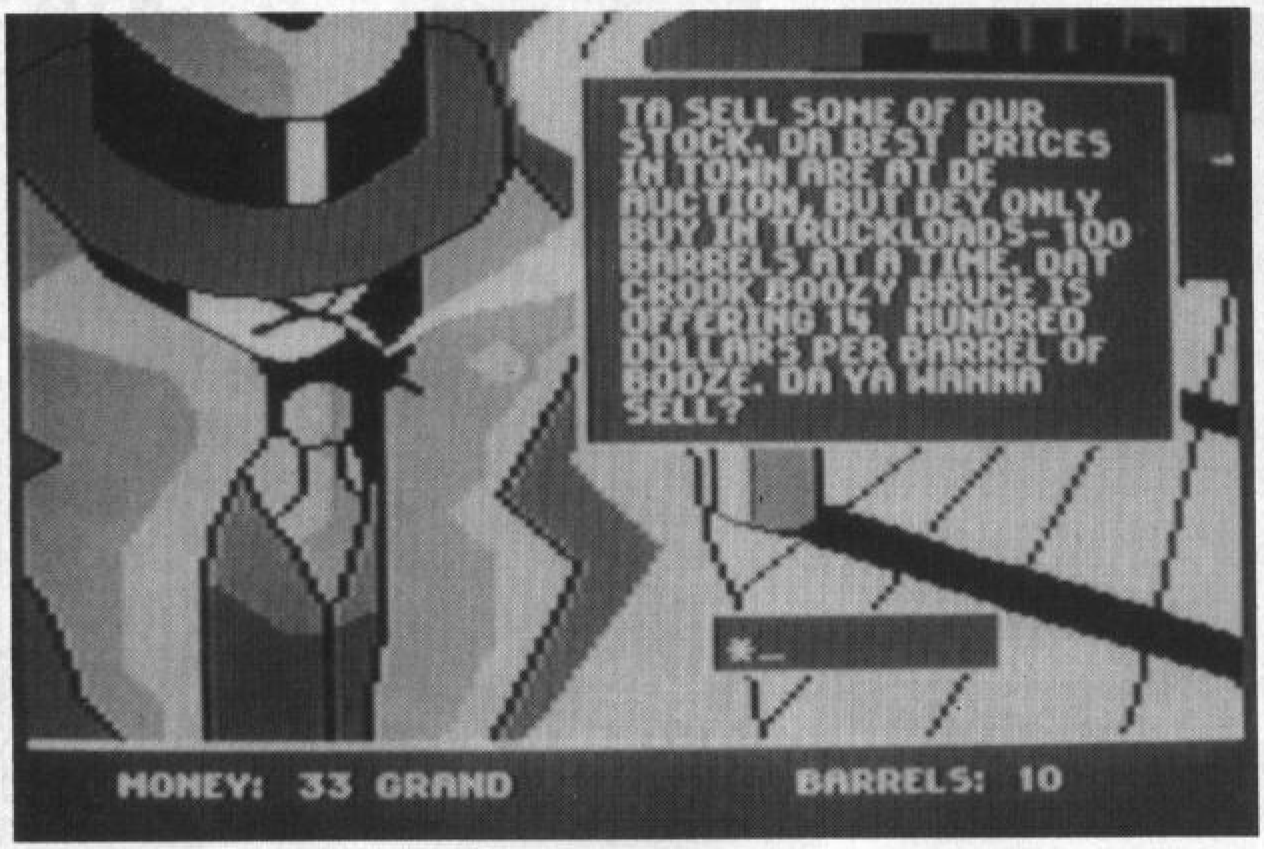
Value For Money 31%
Cheap, and quite rightly so.

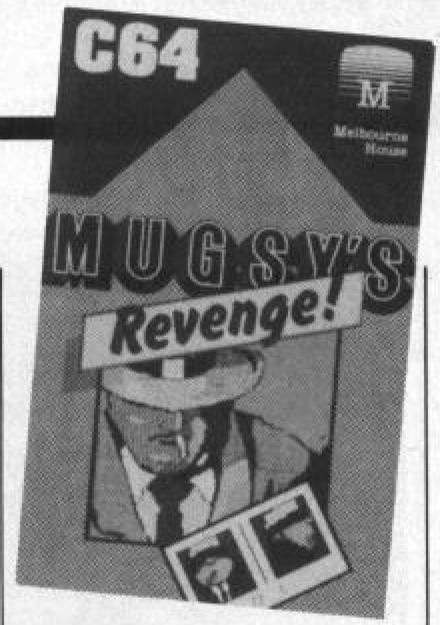
Overall 24%
There have been better at a quid less.

ZZAP! TEST

MUGSY'S REVENGE

Melbourne House, £8.95 cass, keyboard only







Though of a very pretty type, Mugsy's Revenge just doesn't stand up to repeated play. It's just far too dull. The graphics are amazing though, especially the pool hall sequence which is the most film like thing I've yet seen on computer. Musically it is very competent and the little ditties are all very atmospheric. The trouble is that the gameplay is just too simple and very repetitive. It may well be worth a look at, but I can't see the appeal it would create for any end user.

Mugsy's Revenge is set during the American prohibition period around 1919. Mugsy the gangster has just been granted parole and on release from prison has discovered that the selling of alcohol has become illegal. Mugsy's spell in the local jail has not taught him anything about the evils of crime and his immediate reaction to the prohibition is that it's a golden opportunity for him to build up his formerly powerful empire.

You play the role of Mugsy and must take all the decisions which could make him the most powerful gangster of the criminal underworld. One of Mugsy's chief hoods asks all the questions and from your replies carries out orders to the best of his ability. He often gives invaluable advice and tells you if he thinks you're being irresponsible. The game is played over a series of cartoon type screens with text appearing in speech bubbles.

Luckily Mugsy has £50,000 left over from his previous exploits you have to use that sum as a basis on which to build an empire. When play commences Mugsy's hood in chief recommends that 'real dough can be made in moonshine booze, and with your 50 grand we can make a real packet outta smuggling down Canadian booze.' If you agree then he'll recommend you first get some more boys — you can either ignore the suggestion or take on one or two more hoods. Don't forget, though, if you take more people into your organisation their wages have to be paid! Once that little problem has been dealt with your chief hood tells you the current price of barrels of alcohol and asks how many you'd like to try to smuggle in. These barrels can be later sold at quite a profit, although buying excess barrels could leave you lacking in funds — a lot of money has to be given to organise the smuggling ring, and a little donation to the police 'charity fund' helps keep the law away.

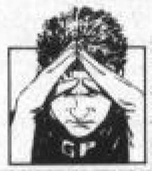
If you manage to smuggle in the booze then you can sell it at a higher price in the auctions, and from this you have to build up your profits. Naturally there are other gangsters constantly trying to undermine each other's supremacy and if you don't keep your hoods happy they could well do a runner and take your money with them. On the other hand, if they enjoy working with you then their enthusiasm will reap its own rewards! If you feel that someone is really cramping your style then you can always have them 'rubbed out'.

If you manage to build up enough money you can start buying nightclubs to give a further boost to profits, but then they have to be staffed with trustworthy men and 'woiking goils'. Occasionally the feds hear of your exploits and a shoot-out occurs. The screen switches to an arcade style battle where you have to fight for your very survival. The shoot-out is played on a street with a few hookers strolling along the sidewalk. The player is given full control over Mugsy who has to walk the dames off the street before the feds arrive. When they do appear they try to shoot Mugsy, who's also armed. He can be hit five times before he dies whilst a fed only needs one shot on target to kill him.

After ten years game time has elapsed the prohibition is lifted and the profits, barrels, girls and nightclubs are all shown on screen so you can see how well you did.



I played Mugsy ages ago and I remember not being too impressed then. The follow-up is very similar, in fact too similar to be worthy of purchasing if you have its forerunner. The different screens, not very numerous, aren't particularly wonderful, although the animated scene is quite nice (for the first couple of times you see it). The game itself is dull and uninteresting and there are only a few things to do each simulated year played. The text is limited and the same old phrases crop up time and time again. Even if you thought Mugsy *was ace you could well be disappointed by this.*



Other than pretty graphics and jolly music, there's not a lot to Mugsy's Revenge. *With little variation in play it soon proves boring, as do the animated sequences and music when you've seen and heard them a couple of times. I think it would have worked better if it was icon driven, since it would have allowed more flexible and varied responses to be entered and injected a bit more life into the game. As it is,* Mugsy's Revenge *is just plain dull.*

Presentation 69%
Reasonable, but nothing over special.

Graphics 78%
A few nice screens, but not many.

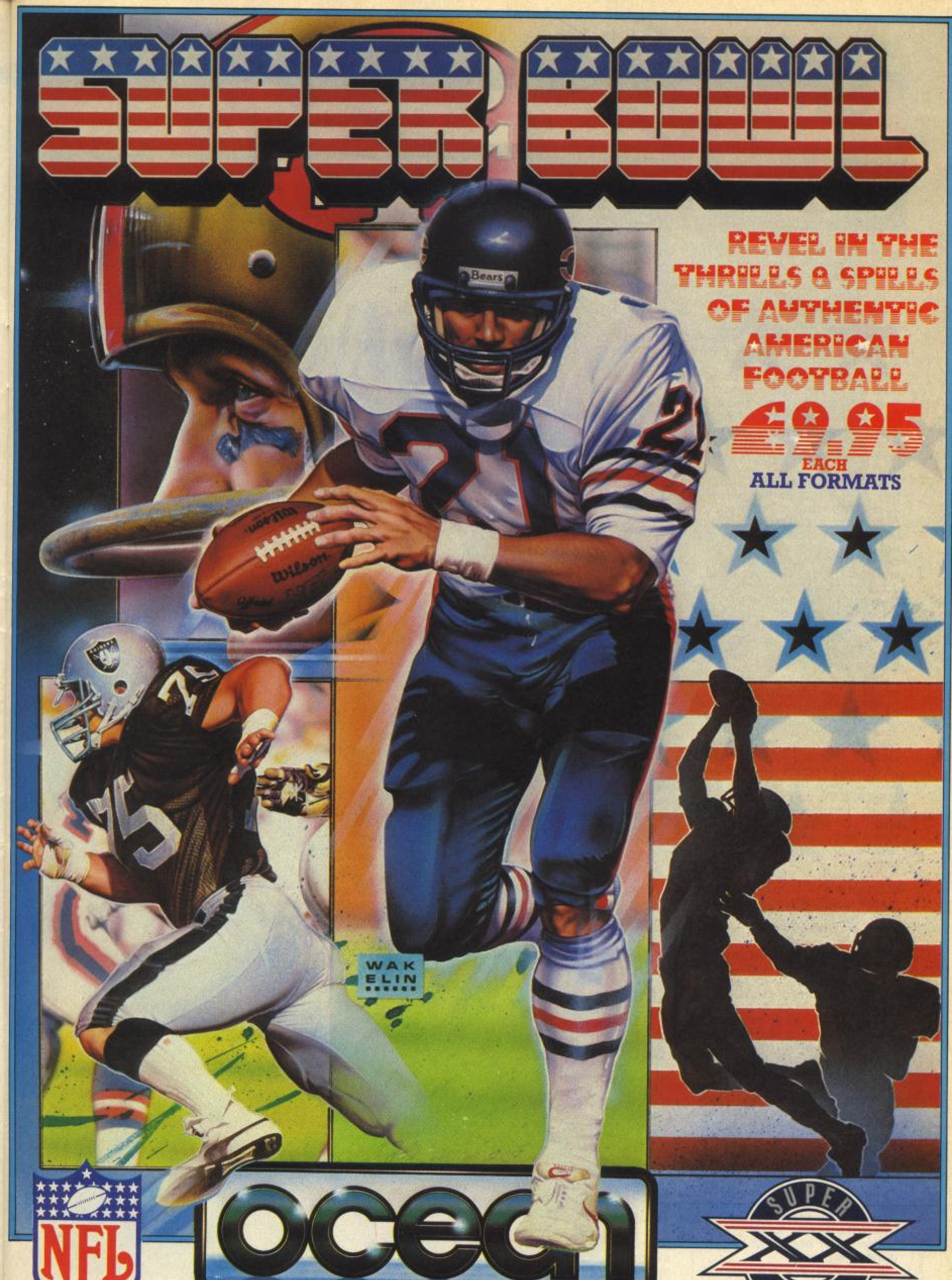
Sound 76%
A few atmospheric tunes.

Hookability 43%
Easy to get into, but not particularly interesting.

Lastability 31%
Limited gameplay and the repetitive nature makes it dull after a couple of games.

Value For Money 27%
Expensive considering its limitations and monotonous nature.

Overall 33%
Don't play it again Sam.



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SUPER XX BOWL

SUPER BOWL

Ocean, £9.95 cass, one or two joysticks

All the hype and pomp of the grand finale of this year's American Football season, Super Bowl XX has been captured in Ocean's latest release, *Super Bowl*. Featuring both teams which played in the final, the **Chicago Bears** and the **New England Patriots**, the player is given a chance to replay the final and rewrite recent NFL history . . . which team will win this time?

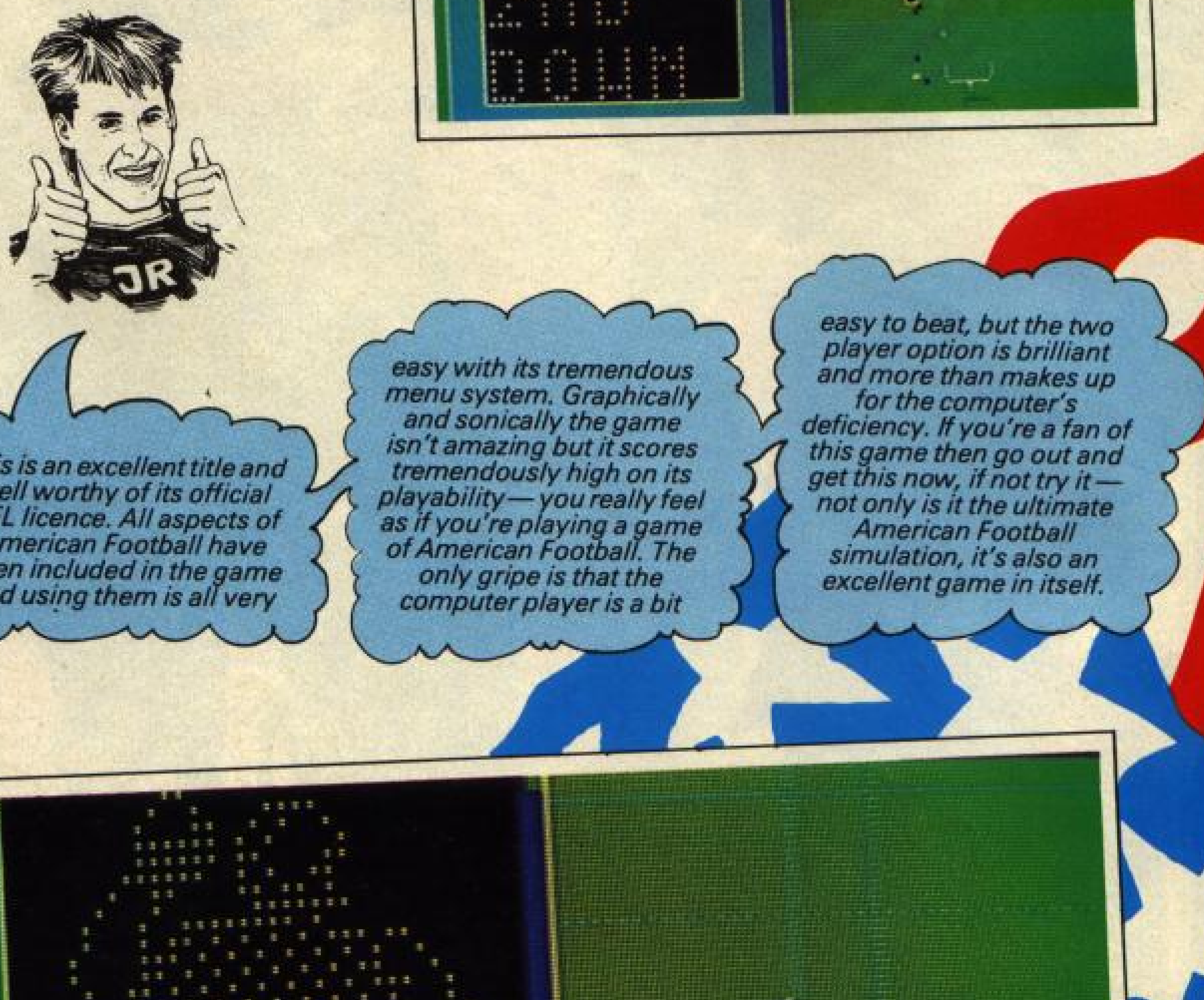
The program caters for one or two players, the former played against the computer controlled *Patriots* team and the latter played as a head to head. Now, we're not going to give a precis of the rules of American Footy here and now, but don't despair if you don't know anything about it. *Super Bowl* has been designed so that novices can play with ease and the package comes complete with two cassettes, the game and an audio cassette explaining the rules.

The screen is split vertically into two separate parts. The right hand side shows an overhead view of about half the pitch (which scrolls up and down as play moves the ball to opposite ends of the field) and the other gives details on the current situation of play, the team on the offensive, the current down and match time elapsed. There are also two mini video screens which show a close up of the actions of players from both teams.

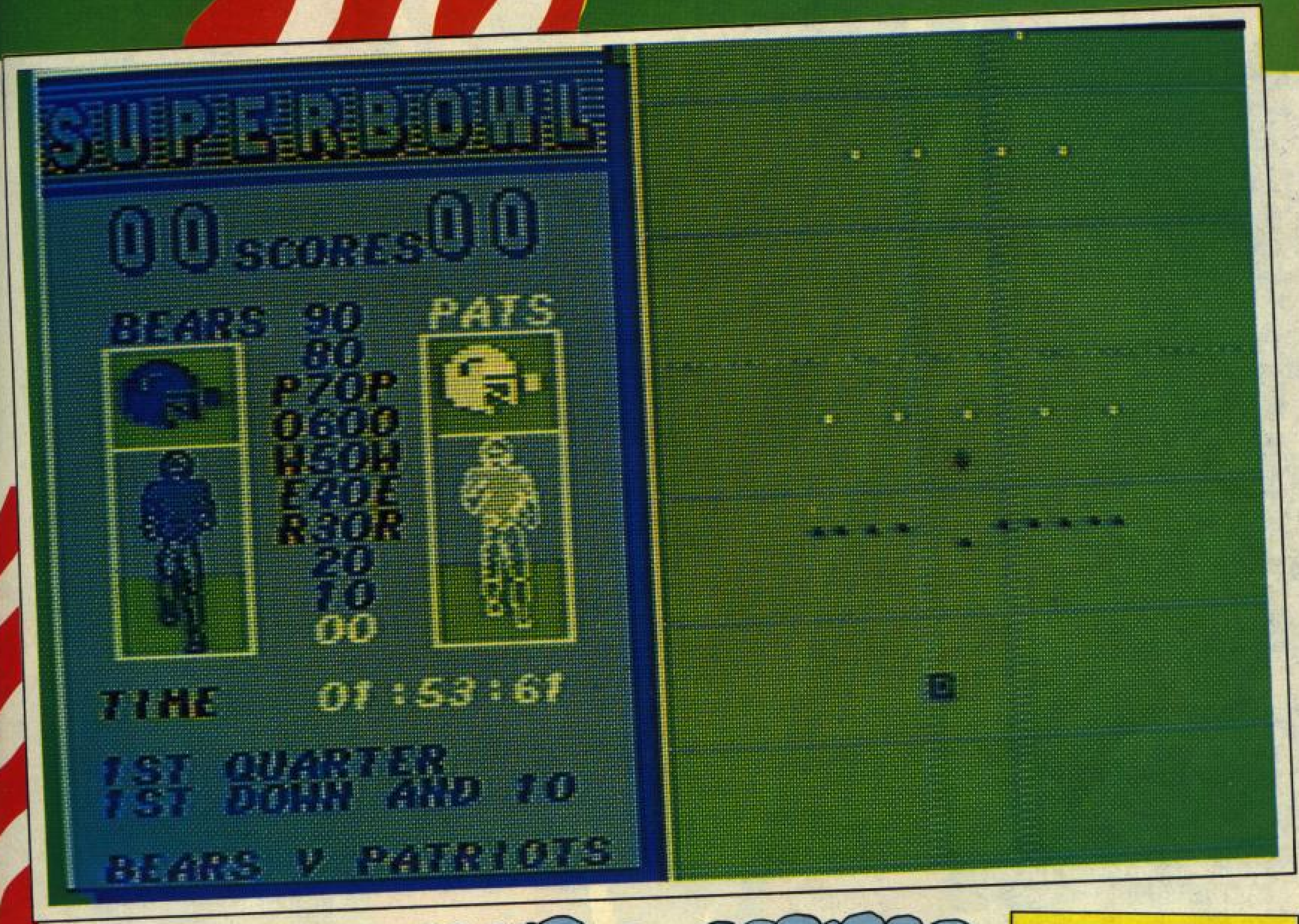
The match is played in four *quarters* each lasting 15 realtime minutes with a change of end at each quarter and the first and third quarters commencing with a kick-off. Controlling the actions of the team is done using a series of pop-up menus from which the player (if playing offensively) sorts out the tactics of play, type of pass and the player to receive (if any). The primary menu gives passing options; long, short, rush play or special play (which leads to a sub menu allowing the player to choose to attempt a punt, field goal or goal line rush). Each type of play leads to a sub menu allowing further specialised tactics to be dictated. Once the passing play has been set up there is an option which the player select to view what the players will do during the forthcoming play. Once happy with the tactics the player then has to select the player to be placed under his or her direct control during the play.

If two players are playing simultaneously then the defensive tactics are sorted out using the same sort of menu system. From this the defensive strategy to thwart the initial forward movement of the offensive team is decided (eg 3-4-4, 7-1-3 etc). Then individual players can be given instructions to mark certain offensive linesmen. This is another very comprehensive menu which has potential for all sorts of defensive tactics. Once that has been settled the player can then choose which player he









or she would like to control during the movement

Now the play can begin proper. A press of the fire button 'snaps' the ball to the quarterback and control of this team member is given to the player. During this time the other members of the team follow the instructions dictated to them by the menu screens. The quarterback can run anywhere on the field and under your control you must guide him through the hordes of players as far as possible before being inevitably tackled. If a tackle is imminent and the quarterback hasn't passed the line of scrimmage then he can throw the ball by pressing the fire button. As long as the fire button is depressed the player can choose which player to throw the ball to, but very swift action is needed otherwise he'll be tackled. As soon as the ball is thrown the catcher is put under the player's control and the game continues. Care has to be taken when throwing the ball lest the opposition intercept or the catcher fumbles.

During the play the defensive team's allocated player is active and can be moved into an intercepting position or mark a player the controller thinks is in a threatening position.

Punting the ball either at kick-off or during an extra point attempt is done by keeping the button pressed and rapidly moving the joystick up and down. This activates the 'power bar' seen on the left hand side of the screen. The player has to determine how much power is needed to either kick the ball up the field or between the posts.

After every play a window emerges from the left hand side of the screen and replays the whole move using three-quarter screen high players, just like you'd see on the telly. If you don't want to see a replay then a press of the fire button skips it so the game can be continued.

Although being a bit late for the American Super-bowl this game has definitely been worth the wait. Most other attempts at an American football simulations have tended to lean more towards the strategy side, but Ocean have brought out the exciting fast action features in the game where you can both plan your moves and play them. Everything is completely joystick controlled and although using the menus is initially tricky, once mastered, some pretty amazing results can be achieved. The replay screen is brilliant with animation that would make Walt Disney proud! With this and Hardball who needs Nicky Horne and the crew.



Presentation 98%
Excellent and easy to use window system and brilliant replay screens.

Graphics 84%
The replay screens are ace but other graphics are rather lacking in any detail.

Sound 18%
A few crowd noises and little else.

Hookability 92%
With its tremendous ease to get into you'll be hooked from kick-off.

Lastability 89%
The computer team is rather easy to beat but the two player option is where the game scores highest.

Value For Money 87%
It's cheaper than travelling to the Superbowl. . . .

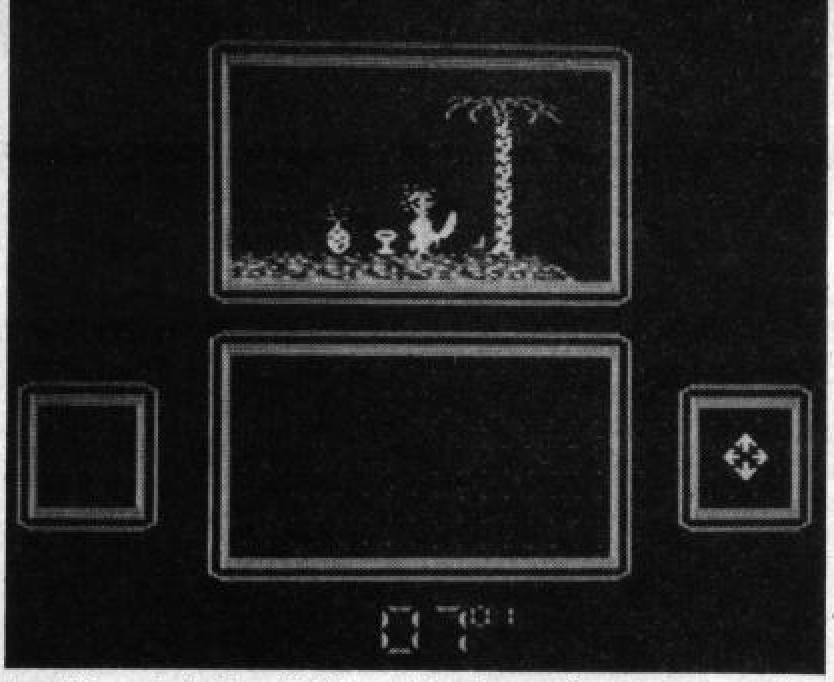
Overall 90%
and just as much fun as the real thing.







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Editors, I hate them!' At least that's what Jeremy the Punk, YOP trainee photo grapher says. He works at the amazingly popular newspaper **The Daily Shocker** . . . The sort of newspaper that prints moving holographic pictures of Page to the surface to get another (phew).

When Jem wants to look inside an object, pulling back on the joystick activates his icon box and pressing the fire button cycles the icons. Using these Jem can look, pick up, use, take a

HOCUS FOCUS

Quicksilva, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

Three girls, and where truth is regarded to be the dog turd on the road to successful journalism.

The esteemed editor of this organ, Hacker Harry, has given his YOPite the chance to prove himself by taking a few photos on a very 'simple' little job. You see, the paper has been tipped off by a contact at Marylebone Cop Shop that a certain Professor Augustus Dopper has just been arrested, and the Police have found enough patent applications in his residence to keep the front page covered for weeks. So off goes young Jezza . . . Trundle, trundle, trundle down to Hyde Park, where the Prof lives, before an evil reporter from **The Daily Stunt** has the chance to cast his lascivious lens over the patent applications.

Like most Professors, Augustus' synapses are warped to say the least, and he's hidden all the applications in objects littered around his large, multi-level subterranean lab. And if that wasn't enough, he's developed a herd of rampaging mutants to guard them lest something should happen to him . . . Gawsh! Poor ol' Jeremy, he doesn't know what's in store!

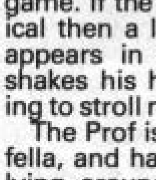
His quest starts near the entrance to the Professor's den of discovery, and he can walk either left or right, towards or away from the entrance. If he trudges to the entrance he discovers that the only way in is through a hole, and as Jezza strolls, the scenery scrolls.

Around the lab are loads of objects, all of which have to be searched. Some contain applications (hurrah) and some are empty (boo), while others have horrible muties residing inside them, which leap out when our hero takes a peek (double boo). If Jeremy gets touched by a mutant then his film is stolen (boo, again) and he has to return

photo and switch off the music which plays throughout the game. If the action seems illogical then a little question mark appears in the box and Jem shakes his head before returning to stroll mode.

The Prof is a very untidy little fella, and has left several items lying around, such as swords and keys. Swords are useful and can be used against the rampaging mutants, whilst keys help Jem to get back to the surface — underneath the entrance to each level is a fan, and if our hero stands on this and uses the key, then it's activated and he is blown up through the hole to the next level.

Oh, by the way, the mutants aren't the only hazard — the other one is invisible . . . It doesn't smell . . . It has no taste . . . It's silent and can't be felt . . . It's . . . It's . . . AAAARGGH!! **Radiation**! Yep, Jeremy continually absorbs radiation, shown on screen as a constantly increasing counter. If this counter reaches thirty rads then Mr YOP 1986 becomes a glowing punk and dies, so regular visits to the surface are a necessity. He also



This is a really jolly little arcade adventure which has some really nice touches. The graphics aren't particularly wonderful, but are adequate for the game. A special mention must go to the music, which has some really amazing voices. I liked the icon system and the way the game has to be completed, and although it is Impossible Missionesque, *it is original and fun. The game costs a couple of quid less than most Commodore games, and is well worth looking at if you want an unusual and fun arcade adventure.*



The most impressive thing about Hocus Focus *is the music, although it does irritate after a while. Graphically it is quite cute, but nothing outstanding. As for the game itself . . . Well, not bad, though I reckon it would make a better budget title. I did enjoy playing it on several occasions, but due to the lack of variety and depth interest soon wanes. Still, a pleasant little game, and worth a look at if you're bored and want something sufficiently interesting to pass the time.*

needs to go back to the surface every now and then to pick up new film, and develop the old.

When an old film is developed the prints can be inserted into a box underneath the main display, and rearranged to form a large picture. The prints can be moved into any position on the grid, and the whole thing works rather like a simplified jigsaw puzzle.

Once the current prints have been inserted then it's another trip underground for more piccies . . . And of course, more hassle.

Presentation 68%
No game options, but otherwise adequate.

Graphics 70%
Average sprites and backgrounds, but nice scrolling window.

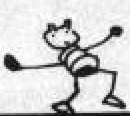
Sound 81%
Short, but very impressive tune, and grotty 'speech'.

Hookability 77%
Easy to get into — and enjoyable too!

Lastability 68%
Photographing a lunatic's abode is tricky, but can prove monotonous.

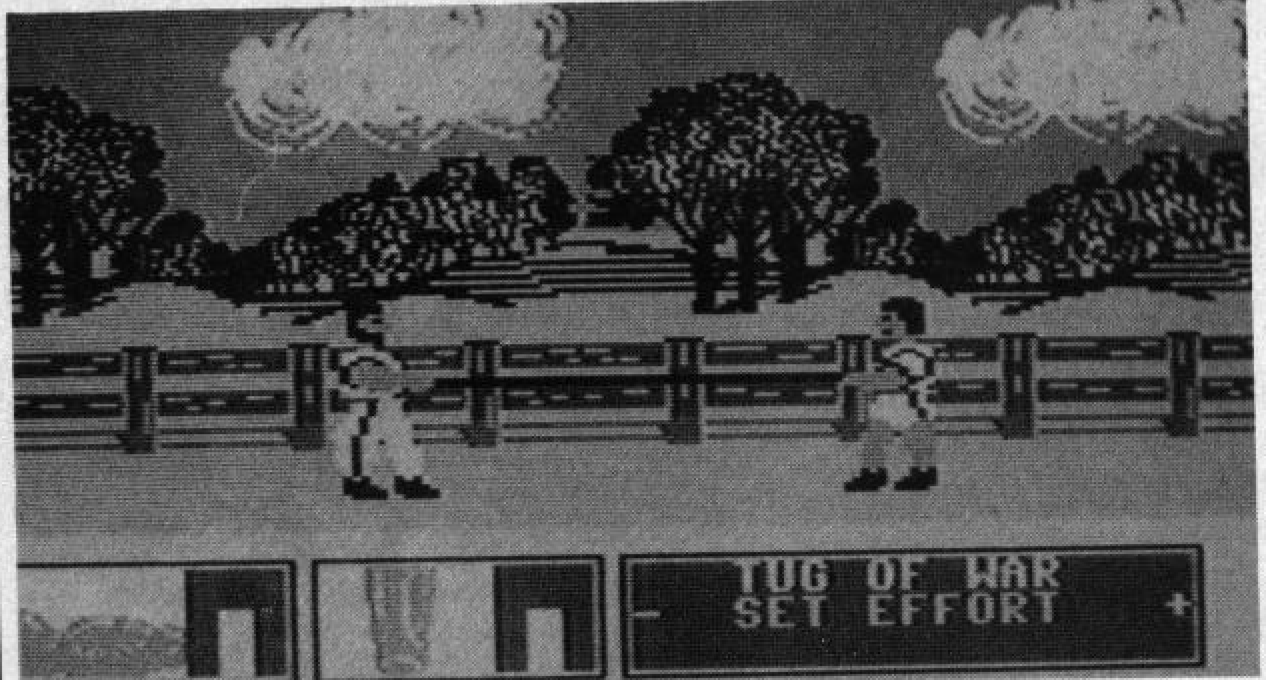
Value For Money 68%
Not overly expensive for what it is.

Overall 70%
A jolly arcade adventure, which is fun to play and offers a fair bit of challenge.



Geoff Capes' Strongman Challenge

Martech, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys



When he's not being jolly tough and really raucous on telly, turning over cars and such like, Geoff Capes is a sprite in *Geoff Capes' Strongman Challenge*. A fat multicolour one at that. Anyway this latest prog from Martech puts you on the spot to be put through a series of computer fitness tests but you don't have to have a Popeye body since it's all done with a joystick. This means that you can bend fifty iron bars around your neck, hurl a million barrels into a waiting truck and biff cars onto their side with an insignificant flick from your little finger without stinking of sweat. Handy if you ever want to find a Mrs Geoff Capes.

First the computer must decide how tough you are, sort the bits from the bytes so to speak. Apparently toughness is measured through how fast you can wiggle the joystick as this is the deciding factor on how much energy is allocated to the Geoff being controlled. Toughness is measured in wittily named Jim's Gym and Geoff stands face to the screen. The idea is to bend as many iron bars around Geoff's neck in a limited amount of time, once the time has drained then an energy allowance is awarded depending on how well Mr Capes performed. After that the energy can be shared around various parts of the body. Throughout the Strongman Challenge the bottom half of the screen displays various bits of flesh in windows. These are the all important muscle icons. Each window also has an energy status and after acquiring the overall energy on the test screen it's up to you to distribute it between various bits of Geoff's body. Using a joystick and arrow pointer, pressing fire when positioned over one of his muscles increases the power in that region of the body. When the energy has run out it's onto the first event, Barrel Loading.

This takes place by the seaside which scrolls into view accompanied by a Rob Hubbard interpretation of 'Roll Out The Barrel'. Gosh, this is a toughie considering that you're supposed to be the world's strongest fatty: two barrels have to be loaded onto an awaiting truck. Before partaking in any event the effort you intend to put in must be decided. The higher the effort the easier it is to complete but Geoff gets knackered easier and the muscle icon's power bars reflect this. If at any time the power on a muscle tries to drop below zero then Geoff faints, we don't want that to happen because all his friends will then take the mick. Once power is set the idea on Barrel loading is to get Geoff to walk down the stairs, pick up a barrel and then get back up the stairs to lob the keg into the back of the truck. Mistiming Geoff's footfalls when stairwalking causes a fall and running out of energy causes a faint. Picking up the barrel is rather simple as it's yet another case of repeated joystick wibbling.

The next event is Tug of War, a battle against the computer generated fatty. The main factors in this eloquent test of skill are the attributing of power onto the different muscle icons. The arm icons decide on how much Geoff grabs and the chest icon's level limits how much he pulls. After setting the correct levels selecting both leg icons starts the pull. First to tug off the edge of the screen wins the war.

The other events, Fairground Bell, Wood Chopping, Sumo Wrestling and Car Rolling, are all presented and played in a similar vein to the first two events though reaching them is not easy. Every time Geoff faints he has to start again. Being the world's strongest fatty is not an easy life.



This is yet another joystick mashing game, and I can't say I'm over the moon at the return of the Decathlon type control method, after all, that sort of thing went out of fashion quite a while ago. The game itself is a dull one with fatty Geoff trolling around making silly noises and fainting whenever the opportunity arose. Even when the game was finally sussed I found no satisfaction in its dull and often boring events. The graphics are very poor — I didn't know that Geoff was a break dancer, well he seems to be because he does some very good moonwalking! The sound is very grating with Rob Hubbard's poorest composition yet. I hope that Martech go back to producing classics like Zoids, *this is just dire.*



Martech have gone from strength to strength since they released Eddie Kidd's Jump Challenge *a couple of years back. Licensing deal after licensing deal followed, and we saw such classics as* Brian Jack's Superstar Challenge *and* Zoids. Crazy Comets *was also very good, despite the absence of a licensed character. Now we have* Geoff Capes' Strongman, *and it is not nice — at least I think so. I don't like the graphics and sound, and I don't like playing it at all. Dull, dull, boring — not interested. Unfortunately, Martech have regressed somewhat, and ought to pull up their proverbial socks. Anyway, at least there's* Samantha Fox's Strip Poker *to look forward to. That is, if you like that sort of thing — I don't, so I'm not overly enthused.*



Oh dear, this is awful. Geoff Capes Strongman Challenge *is really a bit of a shock after such neat releases as* Zoids *and* Crazy Comets *from Martech.* Geoff Capes *is a real let down. Even on the level of a simple wiggle the joystick about game,* Geoff Capes *is awful. Quite surprising is the second screen where the graphics for the hills and clouds look like something from a* Doodle *demo picture. Rob Hubbard's sound track is abrasive, something I never expected him to be. The only really constructive thing you can do with* Geoff Capes *is ignore it and hope that Martech will learn from the lesson and get back to producing decent software.*

Presentation 44%
Lots of superfluous keypresses make any sort of interaction awkward. Poor title screen as well.

Graphics 32%
Dull backgrounds and equally rancid sprites.

Sound 49%
Rob Hubbard manages to audibly annoy throughout. The sound effects are just as bad.

Hookability 34%
There isn't any except, possibly, for those who love Geoff Capes.

Lastability 29%
The game is difficult, the sort you never want to play more than a couple of times.

Value For Money 29%
There are cheaper ways of exercising your joystick muscles.

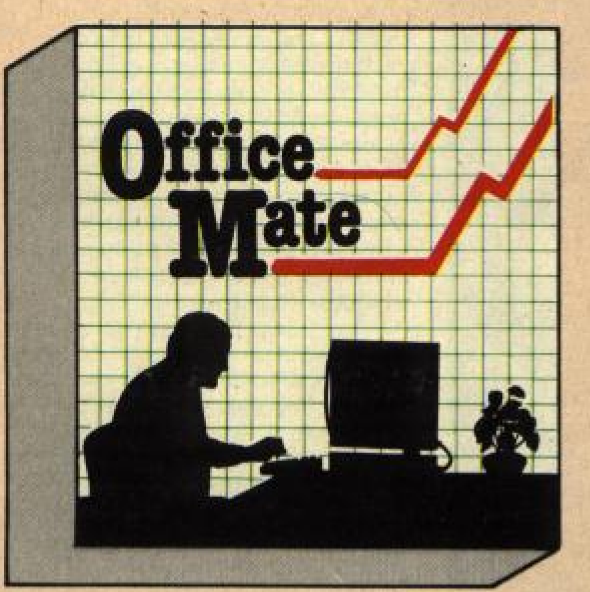
Overall 33%
Not at all worth the time of day, even for joystick wibblers.

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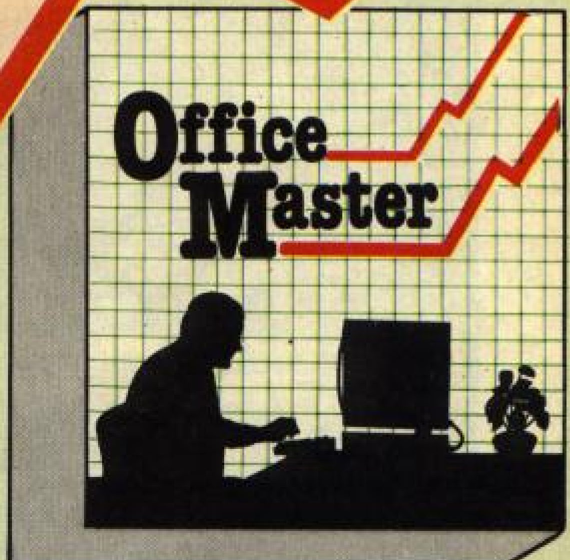
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There is a total of 199 nominal accounts, a large number of which may be defined by the user. You may have up to four cash control accounts, six bank control accounts, one sales ledger and one purchase ledger control account.

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(c) A trial balance whenever required.
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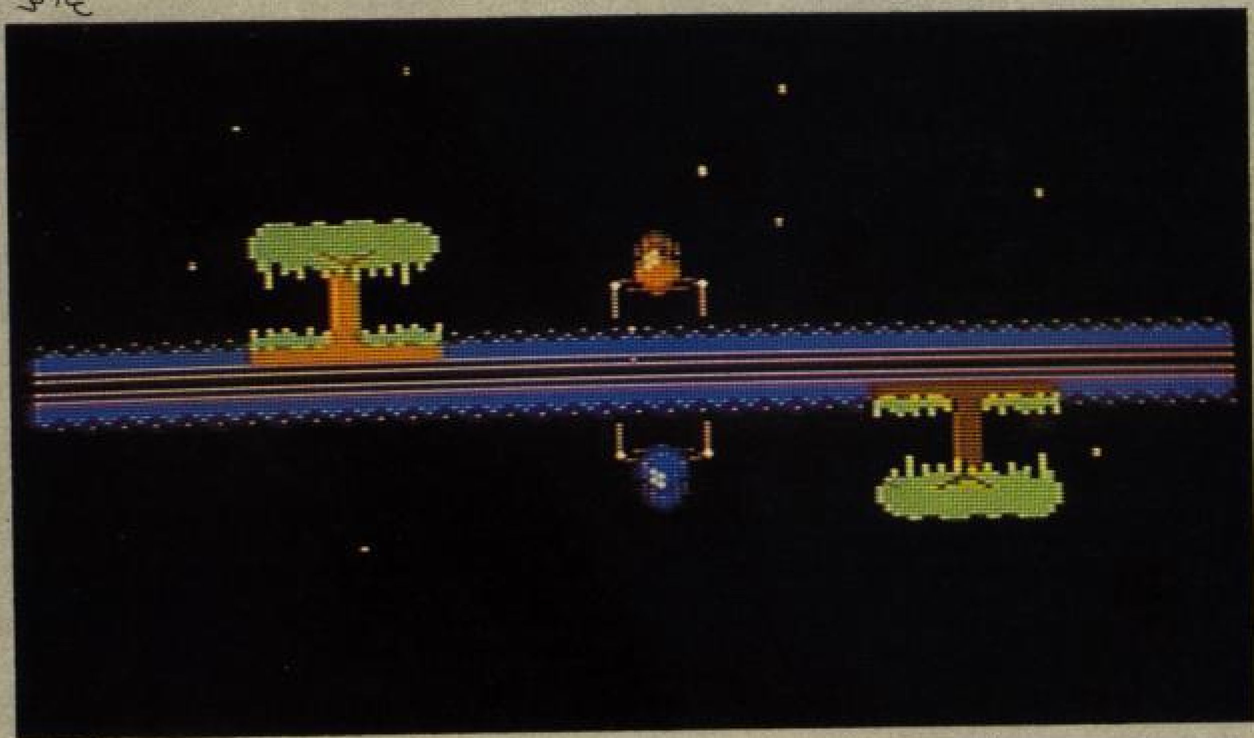
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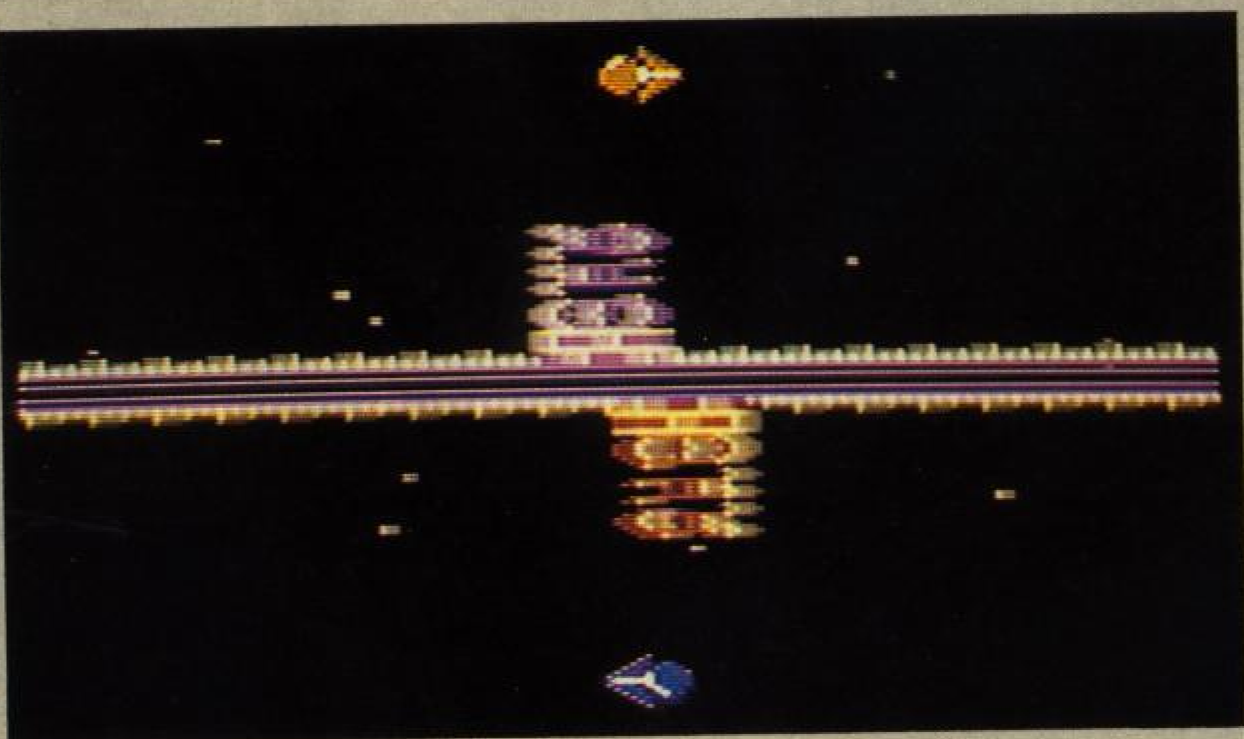
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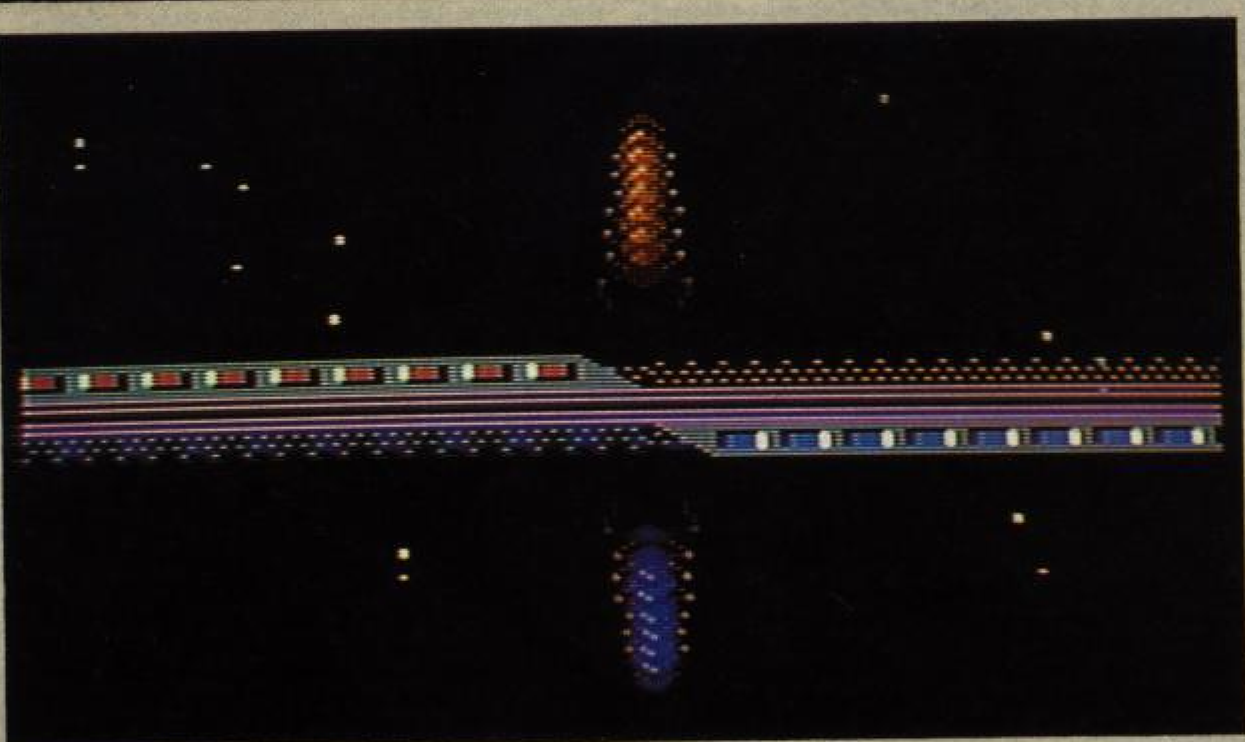
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The Dail







29 Jan

I suppose if I have to pick a day and say. 'I started the game', I guess this is it. I'm still fresh offa the ST, and some idle tinkering with the new assembler I got for the 128 has resulted in a rather neat starfield routine that I'm gonna have in the game. It has 34 stars and they're all generated using just Sprite 0, which leaves plenty of sprites free and room for some scrolling stuff underneath. Uploaded a demo of it onto Cnet.

30 Jan

Fixed a bug that was making the interrupts desync if you tried to run the stars backward. Put stars under stick control and overlayed a scrolling grid just to see what it looked like. OK but grid too regular for high speeds. Don't care, only a demo anyway. Uploaded it to CNET. Think this phase is gonna turn out like *Sheep in Space* a bit, but faster, much. Opposing planet surfaces in centre of screen, warp between? Main character on planet surface will probably be this lovely goat animation that Mo Warden did. It's ace, it even butts. For planet surface, you are the goat — accelerate, and you metamorphose into a spaceship for aerial combat. Accelerate again and you can go really fast over the planet, perhaps auto shields flick on at high speeds? Dunno, I'll see. Never approach a game with too much preconceived ideas, I reckon — let it flow, change, metamorphose. Oh yeah, I'm probably gonna call this game *Iridis Alpha* and it'll blast like crazy.

1 Feb to 14 Feb

(Tied up with proceedings to the launch of *Colourspace* on the ST, which took place on the 10th Feb at the Laserium, so I didn't hack any serious Commodore code during this time. I needed to practise).

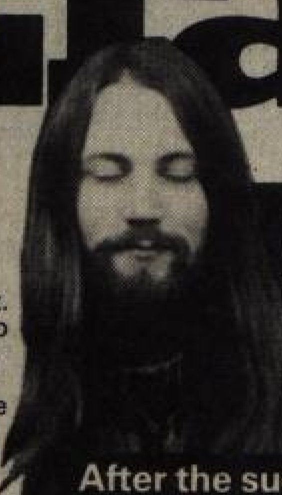
15 Feb

The design is taking more concrete shape in my head. I am altering the scroll routine to fit in with my new plans, and splitting the screen in the middle. Got the contraflow routines going over garbage data just to see if they work. It seems that they do although there seems to be a slight glitch at high forward accelerations that I'll look into later.

16 Feb

Spent the day designing some planet data and graphics, and stuffed it in to see what the routine looks like with some real data. Looked OK but a bit coarse going at 2 pixels/frametime

y Llama



BIRTH OF MINTER'S LATEST

After the success of our last programmer's diary (Andrew Braybrook developing PARADROID) we decided to approach another programmer prepared to risk the same gamble. After his various run-ins with our '12 year-old' reviewing team, JEFF MINTER probably reckoned he had little to lose, and agreed to undertake the mission. Fresh from the llama llab, then, come these words from the great heavy mettallick himself, as he describes the agony and the ecstasy of IRIDIS ALPHA, not to mention the satisfaction to be gained from setting Gary Penn's abode afire by using Gary Liddon as the incendiary device . . .

minimum increment, so I rewrote the stars and planet scroll so that the minimum increment is 1 pixel per frame time. It looks a lot better like that. The planet graphics I did are too coarse, though . . . I don't really like the way they look, so I may well do a new set tomorrow. The current set is based around a block of data 2 chars x 2 chars, and doesn't look that great.

Did write this really neat routine, though. A complete set of planetgraphics takes up 512 bytes of character set data, so I just store the definitions for the top planet and let the computer generate the inverted/reflected set for the bottom planet. Works fine after a little hassle — reflecting multicolour data is a little awkward — but saves storing all those inverted definitions.

17 Feb

Redid the graphics completely, came up with some really nice looking metallic planet structures that I'll probably stick with. Started to write the GenPlan routine that'll generate random planets at will. Good to have a C64 that can generate planets in its spare time. Wrote pulsation routines for the colours; looks well good with some of the planet structures. The metallic look seems to be 'in' at the moment so this first planet will go down well. There will be five planet surface types in all, I reckon, probably do one with grass and sea a bit like *Sheep in Space*, cos I did like that one. It'll be nice to have completely different planet surfaces in top and bottom of the screen. The neat thing is that all the surfaces have the same basic structures, all I do is fit different graphics around each one. Got to sort out the scroll limits tomorrow . . . at the moment you can shoot right off the end of the planet into garbage data which ain't too cool. Down the clocktower in the evening, cheap beer, 50p a pint, Courage Best promotion. Well good.

18 Feb

Fixed scroll limits and did a little more work on the planet generator routine. Scroll looks really neat, especially at high speed. Very pleasing. Must think about doing the ship controls now.

19 Feb

Wrote the code to put Our Hero (tentatively called B-D) (after the little Indian cigarettes I like) on the planet surface, in the right place, and the right colour, and the right size. Wrote the animation routines that'll be used to make him move. Hooked him up to the scroller so that now he walks left and right under joystick command. Started work on *Dark Side* set for *Colourspace*.

20Feb

Put in gravity routines for the robot — he can now run and jump, too. The grav is nice and low, graceful leaps. Robot will have to jump over features on the planet surface.

21 Feb

Ship main control mode now complete, with the addition of the 'spaceship' mode: stop the little robot, jump him up and push the stick left and right to make him transform into a spaceship which can really belt over the planet surface. Control feels good, and I'm pleased, cos that's important.

22-23 Feb

Weekend in Cardiff with some mates and *Colourspace*. *Dark Side* set finished and demonstrated. Was in car crash. Left my scarf in Cardiff. Freaked people out on train on way home.

24 Feb

Sprite plex routines written today to reproduce sprites 1-7 on both planets. Work OK. Put in the other 'upside-down' ship controls, work fine but need upside-down sprites defining! At the moment it isn't inverted, uses the same images as the top one.

25 Feb

Defined the necessary inverted sprites and banged 'em in. They look fine, the mirrored screen and planets scrolling different directions are really bad for the eyes! Tidied up the joystick control to make it less finicky.

26 Feb

Seminar on MSX-2 at Microsoft in Reading. Bit of a booze-up, too smashed to do anything constructive in the afternoon.

27 Feb

Put in planet-surface firing for the top ship. The ship lobs out large round bullets while it is on the planet surface — I intend to have certain nasties that can only be properly killed with ground-based fire. The routine works but I am losing every other frame due to interrupt overrun, so I reduce the number of stars on screen to get back about an inch of interrupt time. This does the trick, all cool. Some faffing around with interrupt positioning needed too.

28 Feb

Finished off firing routines of upper ship, added the faster, horizontal fire that the ship produces while flying above the planet surfaces. The whole thing feels nice, good firing response, just the right spacing between the bullets, and a nice transition from ground/airborne firing modes.

1-2 Mar

Bone idle.

3 Mar

Wrote the extra bullet-handlers to add fire to the lower ship as well as the upper. The lower ship has its own, independent bullets, they can't just be reflections of the upper ship's bullets. The firing is ace. Love it. Especially the gravity on the planet-bound firing, but then I always did go for gravity.

4-5 Mar

Much messing around with graphics for the other planet surfaces, got four defined so far, Metallic, Brick, Country and Mushroom (although I have only half finished the graphics on Mushroom). The afternoon went learning how to set up the new telly I've just bought for doing *Colourspace* on.

6 Mar

In London, setting up for the ATARI show.

7-9 Mar

Also in London, getting very knackered doing the Atari show. Continuous lightshows, on the hour, every hour, for three days. Went to Laserium Sat nite, crashed on mate's floor, failed TOTALLY to get any sleep. Wrecked by Sunday.

10 Mar

Drove to Ludlow for the second stage of the ZZAP! Challenge. Played games all day, boozer in the evening, crashed the night on La Penn's floor. Ceremoniously burnt the review of *Mama Llama* with Penn's own lighter. *(Next morning Gary Liddon woke to find himself covered in the ashes —Ed)*

11 Mar

Got up, read The Beano, went to ZZAP! offices to hassle them for a cup of tea but they ran out of tea bags so had to go to restaurant down the road. Drove back from Ludlow. Lots of sheep near Ludlow, you know. Pretty Welsh ones. Set up 8 foot *Colourspace* screen in Llab. Had mega session on it.

12 Mar

Getting stuff ready for taking to France. Will take 128. Probably won't have much chance to work on I-A until I get there, now. Another session on the big Space rig tonight with some Clocktower regulars.

Next month Jeff continues the saga of I-A. If anyone has information leading to the recovery of some missing sheep from the Ludlow area, will they please contact the Ludlow Young Farmers (who do it in green wellies).

Sean Masterson

Very few games get reviewed in magazines or journals outside the specialist computer press like ZZAP! You won't find many platform game reviews in The Times or in Punch. But you could find an Infocom review. Infocom



FOUR MINDS FOREVER VOYAGING

Little is known about the teams and individuals that develop the games. Infocom don't exactly advertise their products lavishly. And usually, only one or two titles per year are introduced. So, arrangements were made to allow me to chat to four of the people behind the myth to find out just what makes this unique organisation tick.

The usual convoluted phoning arrangements had to be made, timing had to be compatible (which it nearly wasn't as I got the time zone for Massachusetts wrong) and ZZAP! Towers had be clinically sealed to provide the necessary tomb like silence required for our hypersensitive taping equipment (that almost makes it sound good). Despite attempts to have everything arranged properly, there was the inevitable last minute panic. All was well, in the end. This is what transpired . . .

We saw the original adventure game, often referred to as Colossal Cave-Adventure. We thought it had some limitations and decided to write a similar sort of game but better! So we did.

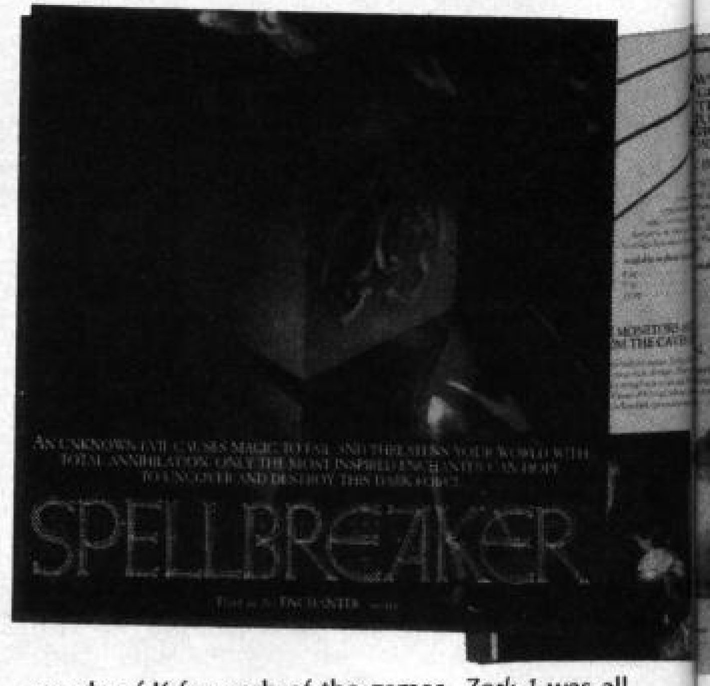
PART 1: DAVE LEBLING (AUTHOR/CO-FOUNDER)

First on the line was Dave Lebling. He helped explain how the company came into existence. 'Well, I was one of the people who helped found the company. There were a bunch of us working at MIT, now called the Laboratory of Computer Science, and we had this frightful idea that we were a pretty clever bunch of people. So we actually founded the company before we knew what we were going to do with it. Only later did we decide to do computer games.

'We were working on all sorts of things. For the ten years before the comany took off, we worked on things which were artificial intelligence related, office products etc. We really did a variety of different activities.'

Dave went on to describe how the first Infocom titles came about. 'Well, we saw the original adventure game, the one that was written by Don Woods and Will Crowther, often referred to as *Colossal Cave/Adventure*. We really were quite excited by it but at the same time, we thought it had some limitations and decided to write a similar sort of game but better! So we did.

'It was written on and off, over a period of about six months to a year. The original version, the very smallest part, was done fairly quickly. But we kept adding. So substantially, what you see today is *Zork* 1, 2 and 3. It was written as one piece first and then split up into a trilogy. When we split it up, we added a lot of new material. Maybe, I don't know, a



couple of K for each of the games. *Zork 1* was all original material. *Zork 2* had new characters and so on.

'The first machine for which the game was released was the TRS 80! In fact at the time, the only candidate machines were that and the Apple. Possibly the Atari as well. What we did, this requires going into our technology a little bit, when we first designed our system, we designed so that we could easily transport our games from one machine to another. Most of the code could remain unchanged. Only a small section, maybe 5 or 10K would have to be changed. In fact, when you're talking about machines with a similar architecture, like the Apple and the Atari, the changes would be even smaller.

'So planning for other machines was part of our design right from the very beginning because we realised that this was going to be a rapidly changing market and we didn't want to have to spend a year doing each conversion. That's why each of our games on that part of our series called Interactive Fiction is simultaneously released.

'The first game I worked on after *Zork 1* and *Zork 2* was *Starcross*, which was a science fiction game . . . and a little bit on *Zork 3*. Then *Enchanter*, after that; then *Suspect* and most recently, last year, *Spellbreaker*, concluding the trilogy we started with *Enchanter*.'

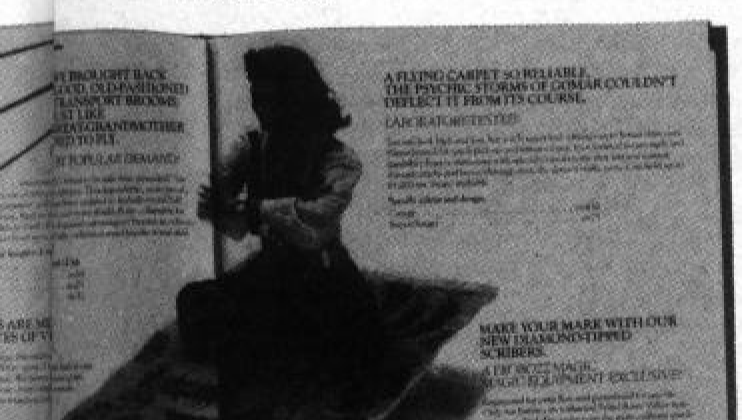
Many people have said that of all the Infocom games, *Starcross* is the most difficult. So where did Dave get the inspiration for such a masterpiece? 'I've probably read hundreds, more likely thousands of science fiction books, stories magazines etc. I've always been interested. *Starcross* was really a homage to a cross between Arthur C Clarke's **Rendevous with Rama** and various Larry Niven



started working in the late seventies, formed out of an Artificial Intelligence development team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and grew rapidly into the most respected software house in the world.

stories. The Niven connection is in the fact that there are a variety of essentially friendly aliens, strange devices and particularly the stepping discs. The red and blue stepping discs that feature in a large number of problems are based on the stepping discs from Larry Niven's **Known Space** stories.'

But as Dave added, *Enchanter* was very different to other games at he time because of its comlex magic system. 'Well, that comes from fantasy — reading fantasy as opposed to science fiction! Really, *Enchanter* was inspired by reading Ursula K Le Guin's **Earthsea Trilogy** which, I think, is one of the best fantasy novels or series ever written. *Enchanter*, well . . . most of our games really, take about nine months to write. I'm not too sure whether *Enchanter* took slightly less or longer, thinking about it.



'On and off during writing the early *Zorks*, if you notice, there's not much in the way of magic or magic spells in those games and I was thinking for a long time, even before we started splitting *Zork* into episodes, that magic spells would make an interesting addition to the games. Eventually I came up with a scheme for doing magic spells and the game resulted.'

So was it intended to evolve as a trilogy like its predecessors did? And what about his conclusion to the series, the recently released *Spellbreaker*, was he satisfied with that? 'No, I suspected it might be a trilogy, and then part way into it, near the end I guess, Steve Meretzky said he'd like to do a second game. So we talked about it and we had some really good ideas and stuff. So before *Enchanter* had been finished, he started work on *Sorcerer*.

'I think I would say that I got most of the things into it (*Spellbreaker*) that I wanted to. Something that I had actually started thinking about at the time that *Enchanter* was written that ultimately appeared in *Spellbreaker* was the idea that you could actually write things and create things yourself in the game. Beyond that, I think the only thing you tend to regret when you've finished, is you always whish there had been that extra 5K or 10K. The game *Spellbreaker*, for instance is something of the order of 1K — once it's inside the system, so a lot of things have to be left out just because of the lack of room.'

Dave explained which of the games he found most difficult to write and which had become his favourite. He also made a point about Infocom's aims in game design. 'Definitely *Suspect*. I've read enormous amounts of literature, not just SF and fantasy but mystery, adventure, so I vowed that I'd never do another one until . . . I will do another mystery once we have a better parser. You need it for the characters. It's too frustrating given the limitations of the conversations.

'Probably, I would say that the favourite is a toss up between *Enchanter* and *Starcross*. I like *Starcross* because my my real love is for just hard SF — stories which move the plot along with science. A lot of the puzzles are down like that in the game. I enjoy that. I enjoy that kind of story.

'The firm seems to have split in two directions. We have these big games, called the Interactive Fiction Plus series which are much bigger and have a richer environment made possible by the size of the few machines they run on. We have the classic games — the ones everybody knows and I think we'll keep doing both because the classics have a certain charm.

'So we'll keep doing that, but more importantly, I think what we want to do is keep . . . well, we want to get it so that play is better, interaction is a lot smoother and more conversational than it is now. What we have done over time is improve it little by little so there are improvements in say, *Spellbreaker* over *Enchanter* but we still know we're geared to smoothness in talking to other human beings. The closer we can get to that, the better our games will be because you don't want to spend most of your time playing what we call 'guess the word'. Our games have very large vocabularies; *A Mind Forever Voyaging* has over two thousand words. On the level, that's still not as much as you would like. The level of English understood is good but not as good as we would like. As we say on our packages, we're never satisfied.'

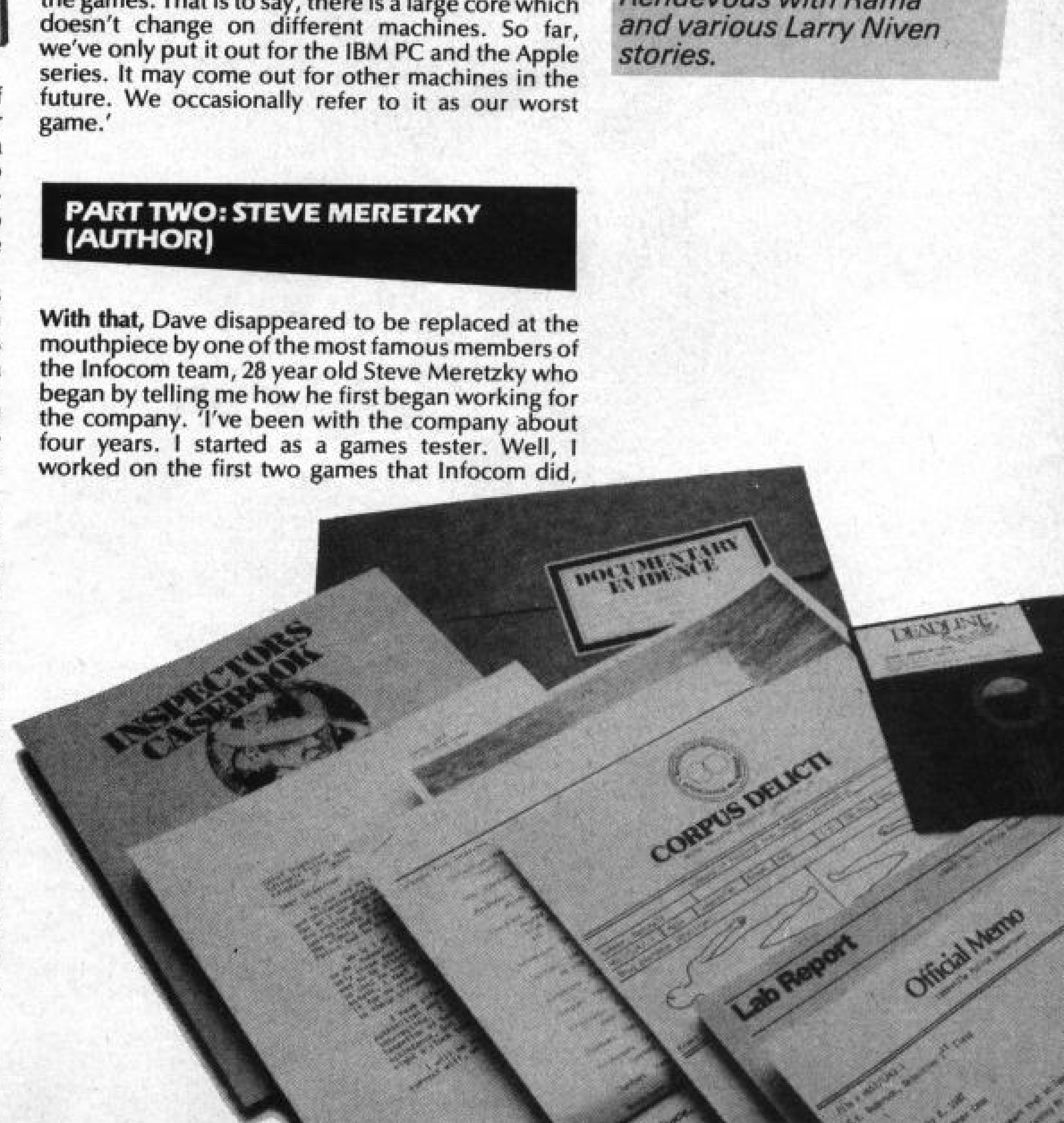
All this was very interesting, but where did the strange *Cornerstone* project fit into the pattern and what's more — what was *Cornerstone*? '*Cornerstone* is a business product. It is the first in a line of business products and it uses similar technology to the games. That is to say, there is a large core which doesn't change on different machines. So far, we've only put it out for the IBM PC and the Apple series. It may come out for other machines in the future. We occasionally refer to it as our worst game.'

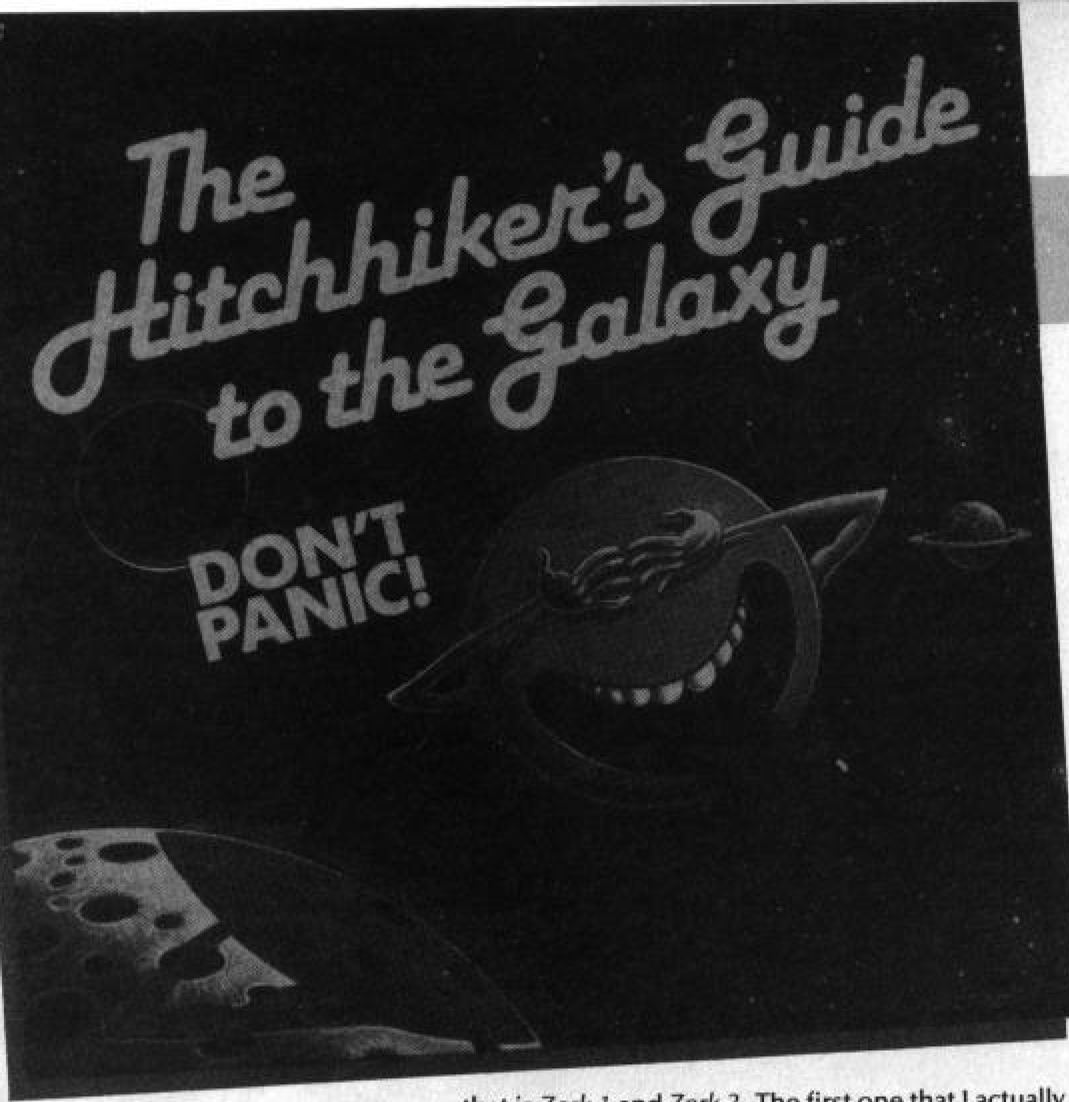
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PART TWO: STEVE MERETZKY (AUTHOR)

With that, Dave disappeared to be replaced at the mouthpiece by one of the most famous members of the Infocom team, 28 year old Steve Meretzky who began by telling me how he first began working for the company. 'I've been with the company about four years. I started as a games tester. Well, I worked on the first two games that Infocom did,





that is *Zork 1* and *Zork 2*. The first one that I actually did as an employee was *Deadline*.'

How did the plot for his first game, *Planetfall* come about? 'Well, I would say that it was pretty typical of most of our designs which is that you start with a storyline and it changes somewhat along the way, but before you begin, you do have an idea of at least roughly what the story's going to be. As you begin doing the actual programming, you get new ideas an things you want to do.

'Then when people begin playing it, you get suggestions. The more you see things that they try to do, the more you get additional ideas. So usually you start with the story and then it evolves over the whole design and implementation.'

You put in a special response case which is usually funny, if you can think of something funny, or is nasty if you happen to be in a bad mood when you write it.

All of Steve's games have had an exceptionally good reception from all sides of the press. When I asked him how he felt about this, he modestly answered from the point of view of the company. 'Well, we feel pretty good. I mean, each game takes pretty close to a year of work. After spending that amount of time on something, you feel pretty good when people like it.'

Fair enough. I asked him if working on *Sorcerer?* created any problems as he was effectively in Dave Lebling's territory, here? 'Well, in some ways it was easier and in some ways it was harder. I was easier in that there wasn't so much independent thinking that I had to do because the game setting was already created. However, it was also harder because I didn't have as much flexibility but it was an interesting change from starting with my own universe.'

I wondered whether Steve had considered any preset objectives with this game. 'No not really. I just wanted to do a game that was very puzzle oriented. *Planetfall* certainly has its share of puzzles but it has much more in the storyline than *Sorcerer* did. I really wanted to try to do something that was almost entirely puzzle oriented. I think that the coal mine puzzle is the hardest part of *Sorcerer*.'

I wanted to have a game which was more serious and had a message in it which was something that we hadn't done before.

Sorcerer was one of the first Infocom games I had played. One of the best features which, as I learned later, was employed in all their games, was the use of considered, unpredictable responses to certain requests. I took the opportunity of asking Steve how these came about. 'Generally, the way they appear is playtesters play the games. They say, "I tried to do this and didn't get a response or a response which didn't make sense or just a default response which isn't good enough in this case." So you put in a special response for that case which is usually funny, if you can think of something funny, or is nasty if you happen to be in a bad mood when you write it. Or if it's a particularly annoying thing that the person tried to do. If it was a stupid thing to do, then you might be a little nastier in your response. Or if it was something that a smart Alec would try to do then you might be nasty as well. But yeah, those are where you really get a lot of opportunity to put humour into the game.'

Probably Steve's (and perhaps Infocom's) most famous game is their adaptation of *The Hitch Hikers Guide To The Galaxy*. Mr Meretzky talked a little about its origins. 'Well, most of the writers here were familiar with and enjoyed the books and the radio shows. Douglas Adams was familiar with and enjoyed some of our products, and so a mutual friend of Infocom's and Douglas's, introduced us and we hit it off pretty well. About a year after that, we started work on the *Hitch Hikers* game and I was basically chosen to do that because I was available at the time and I had done *Planetfall*, which was humourous science fiction.

'It started out with him coming over here and we worked together in Boston for about a week. Then we connected up a computer mail network and communicated pretty much on a daily basis that way. We talked on the phone once or twice a week and then about three months after that first meeting, I went over to England and spent a week there. After that the design was pretty much done and I was left alone to do all the testing and bug fixing type of work and then Douglas came over here for another week right before it went out, just to do some last minute polishing. Basically I did all the programming and he did most of the writing and we designed most of the puzzles working together.'

Steve's latest masterpiece is called *A Mind Forever Voyaging* but unlike their normal games, this one only runs on sixteen bit micros. 'There already is an Amiga version. All our games run on both of those two (ST and Amiga). *AMFV* is the first game in our new plus series. Basically we now have two lines of adventure games; the original line and the plus line which are much larger and won't run on the lower end machines but the plus games and the originals all run on the more powerful machines.'

Steve never seems to run short on ideas (then again, neither do the rest of the team). Certainly, *AMFV* seems to be one of the most original pieces of software to ever appear on a home computer. 'I think it's really hard to track down where the ideas came from. But one thing that made it possible was the system which allowed a lot more complexity and, you know, just a lot more time in the game. Without the Plus system it would have been impossible to have a bigger geography or as much text or anything like that. I also, when I was doing *AMFV*, I wanted to have a game which was more serious and had a message in it which was something that we hadn't done before. And as far as the individual or more specific ideas, they came about the way most come about; just sitting and thinking about it, talking with other people and rejecting ideas and developing the scenario.'

After all this hard work, had Steve considered one game in particular to be his favourite? 'That's really hard to say. I enjoyed all of them for different reasons. Probably *Planetfall* was the most fun because it was the first and so nothing was repetitious and it wasn't like anything I had ever done before.'

NEXT MONTH: Sean talks to **Stu Galley**, Senior Games Designer, and learns that there are no 'bosses' at Infocom; and to **Carl Genatossio**, Art designer, about Infocom's unusual packaging, including the famous flying saucers that kept falling off shop shelves.


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THE ZZAP



The in-house ZZAP! Challenge with guest appearance by Jeff Minter. (Back row) Sean Masterson, Gary Penn wearing silly sunglasses and pointing out Paul Sumner's recent hockey injury on the upper lip, Julian Rignall, Gary Liddon sits forward, and out of it at the front, is the calm Jeff Minter.

THE LUDLOW ARCADE BRAINS TRUST

Eternal Time has rolled through another minute speck of its infinite river, and here I am once again, ensconced in that nano-slice of human life named Ludlow, set for another ZZAP! Challenge. This month, I have decreed an in-house challenge to take place with guest player Jeff Minter, who was the outright winner of last month's Super Challenge between programmers.



The Lounge Liddon relaxes with a quick 'Defender' as Paul and Gary discuss Eidolon strategies.

CHALLENGE

Once again, the rules follow the previous challenge, with each participant choosing a game that all should play. Whereas last month the programmers had chosen their own games and then not particpated in that round, in this challenge, everyone plays every game aiming to get the highest score possible within a ten-minute time limit (excepting *Mama LLama* which is fifteen minutes). As this indicates, not a surprise to see Minter choosing his own creation, *Mama Llama*, it's not only that he likes it, but he likes to rub it in the faces of the egregious ZZAP! minionettes, Penn and Rignall. The particpants then (their chosen games in brackets) are:

Gary Liddon (*Guardian*)
Jeff Minter (*Mama Llama*)
Paul Sumner (*Uridium*)
Julian Rignall (*Pastfinder*)
Sean Masterson (*Encounter*)
Gary Penn (*The Eidolon*)

As a (perhaps) suitable background to this challenge, I decreed that an arcade machine should be brought into the room and turned on. With natural cunning I chose the Stargate 'Defender', since this is a game I know all those taking part adore — it should act as a distraction to their febrile concentrations and result in some interesting disasters. Hah! Sadly, my cunning did not stretch to putting it on £2 play, which might have proved even more interesting.

On then with the ZZAP! Challenge!

GUARDIAN

Gary Liddon
Liddon says that he loves *Guardian* and I am informed that he virtually worships the programmer, Steve Evans. I fail to comprehend how can humans become emotionally involved with pieces of software, and can only surmise that it is some form of binary bestiality. Despite such devotion, the spurious spiv had an uncomfortable game and after 7 minutes his planet was destroyed, and the battle continued in outerspace, where he lost several lives over a period of 30 seconds, finally biting the dust with a score of 122,000, 2.54628 minutes before time up.

Jeff Minter
Declining the offer of a practice game, the hirsute one got straight down to the business in hand, and in a blaze of entrails amassed 108,000 points with ease. Obviously old hands die hard.

Sean Masterson
The ZZAP! strategenarian grasped his joystick with obvious intent and readied himself. It soon became clear that this erstwhile fellow had planned his attack in advance, for he lost life after life with cunning precision and succeeded in playing more games within the allotted time limit than anyone else! Such ingenious play resulted in a high-score of 12,150 points.

Gary Penn
Although a *Guardian* veteran, Penn is by no means proficient at the game. This became satisfyingly and blatantly obvious when he started and lost a life after only 10 seconds! Ha! His misfortune was my ecstasy and he continued for 5 gruelling minutes more, much to my satisfaction, in which time he barely managed to score 56,500 points. Visibly perturbed, garish Gary played again, but gave up in disgust minutes later with both lives and time to spare. If a winner never quits and a quitter never wins, Mr Penn most certainly lost.

Julian Rignall
The self-acclaimed high-score hero oozed with confidence as he entered the fray, and with a look of what can only be described as lust in his eyes, akin to that of a rapist, he casually shot up wave after wave of alien aggressors, salivating with glee as he did so. He eventually emerged with a wry smile across his face and a score of 151,300. Ugh!

Paul Sumner
Having only ever played *Guardian* on a couple of previous occasions, the Housewives' choice understandably lacked confidence in his impending performance. After some uninspiring practice he played 9 short and fraught games, and at best achieved 7,530 points.

MAMA LLAMA

Sean Masterson
Masterson claimed that this was the first time he had seen *Mama Llama*, so he approached the chair with trepidation. However, out of the kindness of his heart (!) Rignall put him at ease by giving him a hand — and to good effect, for he quickly perked up and performed well. As the time limit expired, so did mama llama, and with a CF of 21 under his belt, the malodorous malediction sat back in his chair, a smug smile permeating his stubble stippled jowls.

Jeff Minter
Quite unsurprisingly, Minter played extremely well and finished with a huge CF of 54 in 15 minutes. He later commented on how easy it was to achieve such a high completion factor, and added that any one who knows how to play the game properly could do the same. I was therefore intrigued to see how the two reviewers who passed judgement on *Mama Llama* in issue one would fare . . .

Gary Penn
The puerile one got off to a good start and lost a baby llama after a mere minute of play. He then demonstrated his almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the game by taking the full 15 minutes to attain a pitiful CF of 14. And I thought he'd played *Mama Llama* before. You can't blame Minter for making noises — the man is incapable of being sotto voce.

Gary Liddon
Between mouthfuls of mayonnaise dressed chicken and sweetcorn sandwich, to satisfy his prolapsed stomach, the lounge Liddon attempted to point out that he had only played *Mama Llama* on a few occasions previously, and thus required some help. However, he was spurned. I doubt that this was because no-one actually understood what he was saying, rather they didn't want to. Unperturbed, he put on a brave face and in 13 minutes got a CF of 16 before finally losing the parental beast of burden.

Julian Rignall
I watched with interest as Rignall calmly took his place in front of the game. Unlike Penn, his approach was casual and it was evident that he had played before, for after 6 minutes he had a CF of 24. Shortly thereafter the incompetent fool took too many no-entry signs through the main square and his game came to an end. He started to play again, but time was not on his side and as he reached a CF of 21, his 15 minutes were up.

Paul Sumner
The unfortunate Sumner has never played *Mama Llama* before, and I sympathised as he struggled to get to grips with the game under Rignall's guidance. Paul's play was far from good and he only mustered a CF of 9 in five minutes, poor fellow. He started again, but after three minutes he got bored and decided to give up on the game, and talk to Rignall about his injuries sustained during a recent hockey match instead — a man more interested in satisfying Rignall's curiosity than his own ego.

URIDIUM

Gary Liddon
Despite enthusiasm over Andrew Braybrook's shoot em up and much time spent playing it during his working hours, the self-acclaimed big city slicker's arcade skills hardly glittered in his four games, leaving him with the non too hot best score of 17,260

Sean Masterson
More at home with the obscurities of wargaming hex, Masterson has never played *Uridium*, and blasted off with some trepidation to score only 15,770 in his first game. He improved in second, getting 17,810, while the third game was short (5410) and it finished 15 seconds before time up. A strategic decision was demanded so he decided to call it a day.

Jeff Minter
Last month's Super Challenge was Minter's first encounter with *Uridium* and he liked the game. Metallic music flashing and the gurgling sounds of the background Defender arcade machine, encouraged his best score of 39,055 in two games.

Gary Penn
With Minter's example before him, the perfidious Penn took his seat and almost immediately aborted the first game after quickly losing 2 lives! He didn't do much better with second game either (26.585), but pulled back near the end to get 29,740 before his time ran out.

Julian Rignall
This pitiful performance left Rignall, the

man with rigor mortis of the hair, fair relishing his opportunity to embarrass his colleague, which he did with odious ease, playing only one game and scoring 63,690 with few problems.

Paul Sumner
Exhibiting the kind of common sense for which he is famous, sunny smiling Sumner had practised *Uridium* a lot before the Challenge and got off to a flying start at his chosen game. When his ten minutes were up he had scored 71,915, making him the *Uridium* champion without doubt. It's always nice to see someone with crawling humility come out top for a change!

PASTFINDER

Gary Liddon
I always enjoy it when a challenger hates a game — it puts them at such a disadvantage. The reptillian teasmaid had only played *Pastfinder* a few times didn't think much of it. However, after what seemed to be an enjoyable game lasting 6.5372431 minutes, in which he scored 7650, his opinion changed and he announced that he thought it was quite nice. Pah!

Sean Masterson
Atari snob Masterson let everyone know that he had only ever played the Atari version before. Serve him right, because he didn't fare too well, scoring a puny 6255 before time up. Liddon was pleased if Masterson was not.

Jeff Minter
The Hairy Yak likes *Pastfinder* — no doubt its weird intricacies appeal to his music drugged mind. With very little trouble he scored 15,115 in one game lasting the full ten minutes. Sickening!

Gary Penn
Unlike his namesake, pernicious Penn professes to like the game a lot (but quickly sneaked in a line about not having played it for a while). It shows, and he lost his last life just before time up, having to be content with a lower score than Minter of 14,905.

Julian Rignall
Secondary Atari snob, wriggling Rignall, hated of this parish, displayed an ability to transfer his affection from the Atari version to the Commodore with a predictable traitorousness. He played a comfortable game and got the top score of 18,595.

Paul Sumner
Poor spring time Sumner was left to go last, a daunting task after the revolting Rignall, and on top of that, he had never played *Pastfinder*. Rignall just couldn't stop himself from lending a condescendingly greasy hand, but between them the managed score was only 5,800 in the allotted time.

ENCOUNTER

Gary Liddon
Libellous Liddon the chaise-longue lounger loves *Encounter*, a fact that showed as he did well and reached level 4, scoring 56,600. He admitted afterwards: 'I really enjoyed that.' I didn't — that pretend humble smile is the epitome of smugness.

Sean Masterson
Atarian Masterson had never played the Commodore version and although he was the being to choose *Encounter*, he received a satisfying come-uppance by not doing well. He scored a measly 22,600. Good!

Jeff Minter
Encounter fitted the Minter bill quite



The strain of playing MAMA LLAMA alongside its creator, proves too much for Gary Penn — even with the help of Mickey Mouse.

happily. He took a fairly straightforward game and scored 44,900 it a relaxed manner.

Gary Penn
Prognathous and pusillanimous Penn also likes *Encounter* but I am delighted to report that although he scored 48,500 it appeared to be a troubled game throughout. There is justice in the Universe after all!

Julian Rignall
But then again, perhaps there is not — for the repellant Rignall reached the 4th level with no problems and scored 50,500. I prefer not to dwell on his repulsive gloating afterwards.

Paul Sumner
An *Encounter* virgin, the handsome ZZAP! sprog Sumner did creditably indeed, justifying my original enthusiasm for this son of Much Wenlock. He struggled manfully and managed to get 26,400.

THE EIDOLON

Gary Liddon
Although he has played *Eidolon*, typically, Liddon has never been very good at it. Despite my interjections to the contrary, he asked Penn for help. Penn obliged and to my absolute disgust the obstreperous beast reached level five with a score of 16,690. One day, Liddon — one day . . .

Sean Masterson
Once again Penn's help was demanded, for Masterson, obviously more of an observer than a go-getter, had only ever seen the game played! The combined talents of these two proved exceptional — Masterson made it to level four with 9,540 points!

Jeff Minter
Surprisingly, metallic Minter had never seen *Eidolon* before, but once again Penn made his peanut presence perfidiously palpable, and offered assistance to get Minter up to level four with a score of 11,040.

Gary Penn
What's to be said here? After playing everyone's game for them, Penn had had the most practice and sailed through to level five with a winning score of 23,110. The crude cretin was evidently delighted.

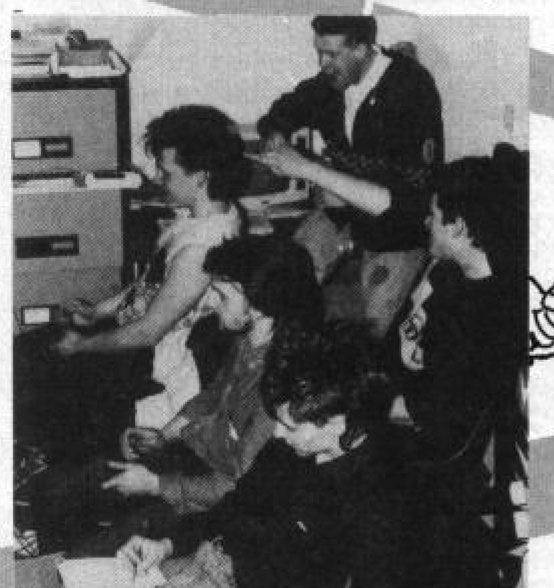
Julian Rignall
Penn wasn't finished though, he couldn't resist the temptation to give Rignall a little help, although considering the result, perhaps sabotage was more his aim, because Rignall wriggled up to level four, finishing with 10,800.

Paul Sumner
Sigh, sigh, Sumner's never played *Eidolon* either. Guess what — yes, populous Penn the peasant puppy once again came to the rescue and Paul got 9,640. Well it could have been worse.

ENDGAME

With all six games played and Cameron the camera having done his technical bit with those silvery umbrellas, bright flashes and light refracting lenses arranged in combinations suitable to the production of latent images on primitive light sensitive film, there was a mad dash for the 'Defender' arcade machine, while the results were painstakingly calculated by the ingenious use of Gary Liddon's four fingers and prehensile thumb. I cannot say I was pleased, for the juvenile, gerrymandering Julian Rignall came out top, a whole two points ahead of last month's star Challenger, Jeff Minter. In third place, surprisingly, considering his complete unsuitability to the position, came the ludicrously lethargic Liddon, a point ahead of the slightly less porcine Penn. This left it to Paul Sumner (my brave Challenger) and the strategically satyric Sean Masterson to fight it out for final place — and Sean won!

Who knows what the future holds? In another microcosmic moment, we will all know — in next month's ZZAP! Challenge.



Gary Liddon sits at the back ably helping Activision's Andrew Wright (a guest) to spoil Penn's game.

	GL	GP	JR	JM	PS	SM
Eidolon	16690	23110	10800	11040	9640	9540
Past	7650	14905	18595	15115	5800	6255
Uridium	17260	29740	63690	39055	71915	17810
Encount	56600	48500	50500	44900	26400	22600
Guard	122000	56500	151300	108000	7530	12,150
Mama	16	14	24	54	9	21

	GL	GP	JR	JM	PS	SM
Eidolon	5	6	3	4	2	1
Past	3	4	6	5	1	2
Uridium	1	3	5	4	6	2
Encount	6	4	5	3	2	1
Guard	5	3	6	4	1	2
Mama	3	2	5	6	1	4
Total	23	22	28	26	13	12

THE SCORELORD SPEAKETH

What a month! My new highscore tables seem to be to the liking of my troops, since my Command Module has literally been filled with claim forms of both new and old recruits. I think I may well have to upgrade my mail sorting droids, although efficient droids are difficult to obtain in this pathetic, primeval hamlet of Ludlow.

The challenge will be back to normal next month, and I will be carefully monitoring the highscore entry forms for a potential champion — practice long and hard my troops, for I want to embarrass the new so-called champion before his ego has a chance to swell to an even bigger size. Until then my glorious fans . . . adieu.

ACE (Cascade)
19,130 Mark Beecroft, Ashington, Northumbs
18,420 Stuart Hudman, Cirencester, Glous
18,360 Pete Roberts, Sheldon, Birmingham
17,630 Garry Holland, Wolverhampton

BATALYX (Ariolasoft)
74,796,750 David Hall, Camberley, Surrey
19,340,250 Jason Williams, Milton Keynes, Bucks

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
2,547,165 Paul Allen, Aberdeen
2,121,022 Mark Stubbs, Redcar, Cleveland
2,050,720 Andrew Nuttall, Flint, Clwyd
1,769,090 Jimmy 'Boy' Thomas, Leicester
1,647,000 Nicholas Wrest, Liverpool
774,165 Nigel Froud, Godalming
655,000 Robert Pocock, Buxton, Derbeyshire
575,151 Jason Roberts, Crosby, Liverpool
448,878 Andrew Grifo, Walkden, Worsley

BALLBLAZER (Activision)
Shut out level 9 droids:
20.1 secs Karl Dent, Somercotes, Derbyshire
27.4 secs Robert Hunt, Bradford, W Yorks
53.0 secs Matthew Cross, Reading, Berks

BARRY MCGIUGAN'S BOXING (Activision)
£21,145,000 Elliot Barrie, Thetford, Norfolk
£20,116,000 Peter Comeford, Ringsend, Dublin
£19,680,000 Michael Davies, Darwen, Lancs
£18,905,000 E Burnett, Westhill, Inverness
£15,186,600 Neil Rudd, Ilfracombe, Devon
£14,232,000 Neil Watson, Spondon, Derby
£7,029,000 Robin Greenwood, Yeadon, Leeds

COMIC BAKERY (Imagine)
4,147,920 David Hall, Camberley, Surrey
1,110,290 Mark Stubbs, Redcar, Cleveland
104,290 Garry Watson, Dumfries, Scotland
98,760 Huw Morgan, Brecon, Powys

CRAZY COMETS (Martech)
141,187 Mark Stubbs, Redcar, Cleveland
105,377 Elliot Barrie, Thetford, Norfolk
64,390 Stephen Moore, Liverpool

COMMANDO (Elite)
10,200,200 Anthony Coggan, Dundee, Scotland
8,102,200 James Howells, Tonypandy, Mid Glam
7,278,600 Gary Badham, Abergavenny, Gwent
5,230,160 Terry Ferguson, London, SE15

DESERT FOX (US Gold)
75,000 (Crusader) D Wright, Hull, N Humbs
44,700 (Crusader) Stuart Hine, Tylers Green, Bucks

THE EIDOLON (Activision)
64,140 John Cruer, Dinaspowle, S Glams
63,510 G Bridgeman, Notts
59,770 Jamie Wiles, Ipswich, Suffolk
58,610 Chris Munghall, Fife, Scotland
52,190 D Murray, London SW17
49,890 Martin Bloor, Nuneaton, Warks
31,091 Ashley Spice, Swanley, Kent
28,400 Paul Rollings, Great Witley, Worcs

ELEKTRAGLIDE (English Software)
155,458 Stephen Pilkington, Blackpool, Lancs
79,354 David Yardley, Lichfield, Staffs
15,254 Stuart Murray, Chelmsford, Essex

ENCOUNTER (Novagen)
809,700 Vinay Narayan, London E7

HUNTER PATROL (Mastertronic)
1,000,750 Mark Hayles, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
230,100 Jon Harding, Wantage, Oxon
164,900 Mark Bond, Dagenham, Essex
125,000 Robin G Clarke, Kempsey, Worcester
119,800 Liam Dorán, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
61,050 Tony Burrel, Billericay, Essex

THE GOONIES (US Gold)
721,675 Martin Robinson, Colne, Lancs
214,800 Neil Hawkins, Coton Fields, Staffs

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)
3,642,000 James Howells, Tonypandy, Mid Glam
2,693,641 Colin Maciver, Inchture, Perthshire
1,582,187 Simon Clarke, Watford, Herts
1,301,416 Zak Zanzie, Southend-on-Sea, Essex
1,126,088 Colin Homer, Enfield, Middx
1,074,048 Glynn Jolliffe, Leigh, Lancs
1,050,784 Lee Radford, Shirebrook, Notts

KORONIS RIFT (Activision)
110,560 K P Morgan, Droitwich, Worcs
32,620 Mark Harris, Bideford, N Devon
26,400 Gary Hill, Leyland, Lancs

KANE (Mastertronic)
113,965 Mark Hayles, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
102,190 Brad Gammage, Elton Brook, Northhampton

MERCENARY (Novagen)
1,409,000cr Martin Robinson, Colne, Lancs
1,409,000cr Paul Harris, Barnstaple, Devon
1,409,000cr M Fitzgerald, Hereford
1,400,000cr Brian Yeo, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
1,339,000cr Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs
1,149,000cr Jon Harding, Wantage, Oxon
1,109,000cr Peter Strickson, Bexhill-on-Sea, E Sussex
1,009,000cr Tak Pang, London, SW17
1,044,000cr Jonathan Crookes, Sheffiely, Yorks

PARADROID (Hewson Consultants)
238,575 David Flanagan, Wakefield, W Yorks
213,885 Andrew Mackay, Liverpool
117,855 Jeremy Long, Elton Brook, Northampton
117,585 Andrew Mckay, Liverpool
112,945 Brad Gammage, Elton Brook, Northampton
107,385 Darren Broad, Bromley, Kent
63,400 Martin Button, Heather, Liecestershire

REVS (Firebird)
Silverstone
1.25.0 Harvey Deacon, Coggeshall, Essex
1.27.4 Ben Lockett, Banbury, Oxon
1.27.6 Paul Adams, Huntingdon, Cambs
1.29.1 Ian Duncan, Hemel Hempstead, Herts
1.32.8 Jason Roberts, Crosby, Liverpool
1.33.3 Richard Brooks, Northumberland Heath, Kent

ROBIN OF THE WOOD (Odin)
99% Gavin Day, Bungay, Suffolk
95% B J Moore, Hartford, Northwich
92% Matthew Ward, Ilford, Essex
91% Stuart Murray, Chelmsford, Essex

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
421,800 William Church, Liskeard, Cornwall
253,800 Simon Harris, Steyning, W Sussex
108,200 Mark Ploughman, Worthing, Sussex
62,000 Robert Hunt, Bradford, W Yorks

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS (Activision)
610,100 Barry Jordan, Hook Norton

RAMBO (Ocean)
3,926,700 Danny Edery London SW4
1,716,100 Cliff Malinder, London N15
1,574,400 Jason Tinkler, Wirral, Bebington
1,454,300 Michael Gandy, Oswestry, Shrops
973,600 David Connor, Aintree, Liverpool
477,800 Jeff Bolton, Cramlington

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)
99,258 Dave Berry, Merseyside
70,544 Julian Procter, Blackburn, Lancs
67,512 Nick Burton, Southampton

SKOOLDAZE (Microsphere)
32,060 Robert Hunt, Bradford, W Yorks
21,840 Alex Wilson, Hemel Hemstead, Herts

TRANSFORMERS (Ocean)
13,673 Stephen Cooper, Stevenage, Herts
10,292 Alex Wilson, Simon Vispi, London SW5 9TD
6,907 Graeme Melville, Errol
6,498 Simon Harris, Steyning, W Sussex

URIDIUM (Hewson Consultants)
334,680 Peter Clarke, Skelmersdale, Lancs
168,900 Peter Williams, Craven Arms, Shropshire
155,610 Malcolm Kell, Glasgow
138,280 Ross Cairns, PScone, Perthshire
132,500 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!
121,705 Andrew Hudson, Norwich
119,055 Joel Dinning, Worthing, Sussex
111,855 Kinnon Paterson, Middlesborough, Cleveland

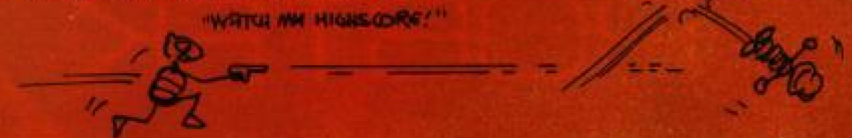
WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
102,070 Nick Burton, Southampton

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
11,525,700 Sui Wai Cheung, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs
8,860,000 Ray Claydon, Egham, Surrey
7,860,100 Tony Lander, Birmingham
7,794,800 Tony Doyle, London SE 6
5,053,895 Andrew Grifo, Walkden, Worsley
4,763,400 Doug Johns, Portsmouth, Hants
4,435,800 Paul Pattinson, Shipley, W Yorks
3,603,600 Brandon Appleby, Sunderland
3,387,400 Chris Smith, Sunderland
3,100,440 Kevin Murphy, Fife, Scotland

Z (Rhino)
211,900 D Wright, Hull, N Humbs
189,000 Neil Grant, Crabbs Cross, Redditch
115,300 Jeff Bolton, Cramlington
93,665 Richard Aston, Wolverhampton

ZORRO (US Gold)
68,187 Philip Williams, Basford, Nottingham
60,305 Paul Darren, London N17, GLP

All you highscoring girls and boys, send your score(s) unto me. A postcard, letter, sub-etha transmission or the like will do fine. What I want to know is your score, level reached, time taken and any other relevant details (the more the better). Then put your name, address and telephone number (just in case I want to contact you) and send it off to: ZZAP! CHALLENGE, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.





4
ZZAP! SIZZLERS FOR YOUR CBM 64/128
WHO DARES WINS II
Only the bravest volunteer for the ultimate suicide mission to free lost compatriots held prisoner by the armies of death, the forces of oppression. Only the fearless dare take up a challenge where courage and endurance are as essential as intelligence and skill. Compulsive. Action packed. Step forward, modern day hero, you'll never know how good you really are until you've tested yourself on the ultimate mission.
DROPZONE
It's the year 2085. Only a handful of people have survived the robot wars that rocked the Solar System. In a final desperate bid for survival a Tacheon propelled star cruiser has been developed on Earth to transport survivors to a new star system. But the cruiser relies on rare Ionian crystals for its power, crystals which are only abundant on Jupiter's second moon Io. It is your mission to escort the men and their precious crystals safely from the surface of Io to the Dropzone where the landing pad is located.
WIZARD'S LAIR
Tis a legend told long ago
About dark caves far down below
Where deep within a Wizard dwells,
Bespoking doom and casting spells.
If this lair thou dost uncover,
Four pieces of lion thou must discover.
Only then may you escape
Past the lion that guards the gate.
So heed this warning and beware
Never venture into 'Wizard's Lair'.
THING ON A SPRING
The evil goblin is wreaking havoc on an unsuspecting world, casting spells and banishing its treasures to his underground factory deep in the bowels of the earth.
How can he be stopped? What can we do? Who can do it? There's only one saviour – our hero – Thing on a Spring!
Complete the magical jigsaw and break his fiendish spell.
DISK £14.95
TAPES £9.95
ZZAP! SIZZLERS
Who Dares Wins II
Wizard's Lair
Dropzone
Thing on a Spring
ALIEN 8
Long long ago ... in a distant galaxy, on a distant dying planet, the last of the guardians prepare their starship for its final journey. All of the libraries, records and knowledge have been stored aboard the vessel, along with the very best of their cryogenically preserved race. The planet's final end draws near as the last, most vital piece of equipment is loaded aboard, activated, and the hatchways closed. The ULTIMATE evolution ALIEN 8 cybot whirrs into an artificial cybernetic rush of intelligence.
All hatchways are sealed, as the starship prepares for its long uninterrupted journey into the inky void of space.
SPY HUNTER
The official home version of Bally Midway's 1st arcade hit.
• You control the turbo charged race car/hydro spy boat.
• You control a deadly arsenal of missiles, machine guns, oil slicks and smoke screens.
• Sophisticated spy-challenging graphics.
This is hardly a game. It's a high-speed test of your secret agent skills. Meet the challenge and survive Spy Hunter!
SPY HUNTER
SEGA
DUN DARACH
It happened that, following a fateful, bloody and largely pointless battle against the Conachta, Cuchulainn the Great was returning home to Muirmethne in company of his faithful charioteer, Loeg, pointless because the enemy was a scouting party and not intent on taking the peak of Beann Ghulban, below which the battle took place; fateful because, amongst their number was Amhair, a Prince of the Conachta and the darling of his father, who vowed on instant revenge.....
NIGHT GUNNER
48K SPECTRUM
DUN DARACH
NIGHT GUNNER
The air battle where only aces survive! Each of the 30 different missions pushes you to the limit with enemy fighters attacking from all directions, guns ablazing! – explosive 3D ground attack sorties, and there's still the flight home.
4
CRASH SMASHES FOR YOUR SPECTRUM 48K
TAPES £9.95
CRASH Smashes
Spy Hunter
Night Gunner
Dun Darach
Alien 8
Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House, 10, Carver Street, Sheffield, S1 4FS. Tel: (0742) 753423.

FANCY CHANCING YOUR ARM AT BASEBALL OR MAYBE YOU WANT TO BE A HERO OF THE OLD WEST OR WHAT ABOUT AN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE 35th CENTURY



PSI 5 Trading Company™

You are about to captain your ship through one of the great edge-of-your-seat adventures of the 35th Century.

Sitting on a mother lode of rich mining deposits, the Parvin Frontier is a mecca for settlers, entrepreneurs on both sides of the law, and some of the worst scum of the universe. The inhabitants are on the brink of starvation and will pay anything to anyone who can get through to them with a ship of supplies from the outside world.

If you're ripe for a challenge and feel comfortable in the role of Space Freighter Captain, your ship just came in. Choose your crew from a collection of human and inhuman characters. Sharpen your management skills and man the bridge. Take command with detailed graphics, realistic sound and the finest bridge instrumentation the 35th Century has to offer.

Keyboard or joystick controlled.



Law of the West™

Law of the West's astounding interactive adventure puts you in the midst of turbulent Old West action. As the Sheriff of Gold Gulch – as tough a Wild West town as there ever was – you'll have all you can do to survive 'til sundown.

If you've ever wanted to pin a tin star to your chest and match the exploits of a Bat Masterson or Wyatt Earp, then here's your chance. Ultra-large graphics, lifelike action, and natural playability deliver excitement so real you can almost smell the gunpowder.

Entirely joystick controlled.



Hardball™

Batter up! The most graphically stunning computer baseball game ever developed! HardBall puts you on the field and in the dugout as both player and manager of a baseball team. It'll put you in the big leagues.

Here's computer baseball so real that you'll be reaching for your rosin bag before each pitch. Each field has 3-D perspective. Full-sized animation brings the game action to life as you play against the computer or another human baseball fan.

HardBall gives you command of the physical interactions and strategic decisions of baseball. Test your game strategy from a manager's point of view. Hit and run. Steal. Sacrifice. Leap for long fly balls or dive for grounders. Play ball!

Entirely joystick controlled.

£9.95 CASSETTE **£14.95** DISK

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ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 For MAY 1986

Chart Voting Draw Winners . . .
Winner (£40 worth of software plus T-shirt): **Terry Ferguson,** Peckham, London. **Runners Up** (ZZAP! T-shirt and cap): **Adrian Price,** Ammanford, Dyfed; **Danny Davies,** Walsall, West Midlands; **Steven Devlin,** Newburgh, Aberdeenshire; **Jason Walker,** Basingstoke, Hants.

1 *(1)* **PARADROID** (13%)
HEWSON, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

2 *(2)* **WINTER GAMES** (10%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 94%

3 *(10)* **COMMANDO** (6%)
ELITE, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 77%

4 *(3)* **SUMMER GAMES II** (5%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

5 *(9)* **MERCENARY** (5%)
NOVAGEN, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 98%

6 *(4)* **LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE** (4%)
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

7 *(11)* **ELITE** (3%)
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 92%

8 *(12)* **RAMBO** (3%)
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 65%

9 *(5)* **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** (3%)
MELBOURNE HOUSE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

10 *(15)* **FIGHT NIGHT** (3%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 93%

11 *(21)* **BALLBLAZER**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 98%

12 *(6)* **PITSTOP II**
US GOLD, £9.95 disk, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 91%

13 *(16)* **WHO DARES WINS II**
ALLIGATA, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

14 *(-)* **ROCK 'N' WRESTLE**
MELBOURNE HOUSE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 53%

15 *(25)* **KORONIS RIFT**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

16 *(7)* **MONTY ON THE RUN**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 90%

17 *(-)* **KUNG-FU MASTER**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 79%

8 *(8)* **BOUNDER**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

19 *(-)* **YIE AR KUNG-FU**
IMAGINE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 68%

20 *(17)* **ROBIN OF THE WOOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 92%

21 *(19)* **DROPZONE**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 95%

22 *(26)* **HYPER SPORTS**
IMAGINE, 8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

23 *(18)* **THE EIDOLON**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

24 *(24)* **REVS**
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

25 *(14)* **SKYFOX**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 91%

26 *(-)* **Z**
Rino, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 88%

27 *(23)* **KIK START**
MASTERTRONIC, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

28 *(-)* **BEACH HEAD II**
US Gold, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

29 *(28)* **NODES OF YESOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

30 *(20)* **THING ON A SPRING**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

YOU COULD WIN SOFTWARE BY VOTING FOR THE ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 CHART!

Every month we give away an amazing **£40 worth of software** to the first person whose ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 VOTING FORM is pulled from the bag. The winner also receives a super ZZAP! 64 T-shirt. Four runners up get a T-shirt and a ZZAP! Cap. So all you have to do is fill out the form below, remembering to put your name and address down, list your five favourite games in descending order (remember they must be released games that you have played), state which software you would like (to a total value of £40) should you win, and your T-shirt size (S,M,L). Then send your form in to the address shown.

ZZAP! 64 TOP 30 VOTING COUPON

(Please write in block capitals)

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

If I win the £40 worth of software, the games I would like are:
Game (and software house)

My T-shirt size is S/M/L

I am voting for the following five games:

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

ZZAP! TOP 30, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

TAKE TO THE TRACK IN STYL

Two Chances to win £1,000 worth of Kart and Karting Gear, courtesy of Rainbird

Karting is an exciting sport, there's no doubt about that. Over 2,000 people are involved in the sport in this country and there are stacks of international competitions as well as UK championships for you to enter. Most people have a Kart racing circuit quite close to them — so don't worry, if you win, enjoying your prize to the full shouldn't present too much of a problem. Soon you, like Rainbird, could be on your way to the top. Remember some rather famous names in the motor racing world cut their driving teeth on Kart circuits: **Senna, Piquet, Surer, Cheever, Patrese, Fabit** and the current Formula One World Champion, **Alain Prost** to drop just a handful of names.

When it comes to Competition prizes, **Rainbird** doesn't mess around. The chaps behind Firebird's sister software house are offering two thousand pounds worth of Karting goodies in this competition.
Rainbird's got some pretty major plans when it comes to publishing software, too. ART STUDIO has won some serious acclaim — voted the best Spectrum Art Utility by CRASH it should soon be appearing on other machines. And THE MUSIC SYSTEM and THE ADVANCED MUSIC SYSTEM have really made a hit with Amstrad and Commodore owners. Anyone interested in making music, at any level, with their computer would be daft not to get hold of Rainbird's Tuneful Software.
But these major successes are but peanuts, as far as the Rainbird crew is concerned. They're going for the big time in the games market, and intend to tackle the big American software publishers at their own game, reversing the trend of American Imports. And from what we've seen so far, there's some pretty impressive product due from Rainbird's perch in the coming year.

The first Rainbird adventure game, THE PAWN, did more than raise a few eyebrows when it was unveiled on the Atari ST in Las Vegas — it stunned a few folks. Just take a peek at the picture taken from the Atari version of the game by Magnetic Scrolls. Wow! Eh? More and more text and graphics adventures are promised soon.

Strategy fans and Wargamers will soon thrill to Union Software's TRACKER, an artificially intelligent game with remote control fighting forces; underway on the Commodore at the moment Rainbird should be bringing a new brand of 3D combat to a microcomputer near you quite soon . . .

Another Atari ST product in the pipeline is STARGLIDER, a flight simulator which sets you in the cockpit of a well-heavy fighting machine. Indulge in arcade action as you get involved in Air to Air and Air to Ground combat. Argonaut Software are very busy with it at the moment, but conversions for other machines are planned.





The sort of thing on offer, prizewise. A collection of goodies outside the ZIP KART showrooms — you could be shopping there with £1,000 of Rainbird's money to spend!



Cover piccy for THE PAWN.



NEAAAOW! Zooming along the cover for TRACKER, the strategy wargame that Rainbird should be publishing soon.



The STARGLIDER cover artwork





Atari ST incarnation of THE PAWN

E WITH



RAINBIRD

& NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS

So, as you can see, Rainbird is going for the top. Their stated intention is to "beat the rest and become the best". Now they're giving two lucky readers of **Newsfield**'s magazines, CRASH, ZZAP! and AMTIX! the chance to race for the top in the Kart world.
The Big Cheese at Rainbird Software, Tony Rainbird (they called the company after him — he didn't change *his* name, so you can tell he's a Big Cheese Par Excellence) used to be a pretty good Kart Racer before he got too involved in computer software.
Tony decided to give a couple of Newsfield readers a helping hand up the ladder of Karting success. Rainbird, the software house, has purchased a couple of £1,000 vouchers from **Zip Kart**, premier suppliers of Karts and Karting accessories. If you win one of these vouchers you'll be able to get kitted out with a complete Kart, an engine, driver's suit, helmet, gloves, boots, a kit bag to keep everything in and a paddock stand to keep your shiny new Kart on when you're not racing it.

And there's more. Uncle Tony will be on hand when you scamper down to Zip Kart's Hoddesdon HQ to select the gear and he'll help you choose and set up your equipment as well as introduce you to some helpful people in the Karting world.

So. What have you got to do to convince Rainbird that you deserve to win a super Kart Kit? Design the Perfect Kart, that's what. Get out your pens, pencils, cameras, colouring sticks, pastels, TD pens or whatever and let your imagination run riot. Technology is not a problem — design the Kart and let the next generation of engineers worry about making it a reality. Money is no object — but don't go overboard with diamond-studded tyres for extra grip or anything, unless your Kart is for Oil Billionaires to play with. Don't forget that real Karts have a maximum engine capacity of 100 cc and the motor is two-stroke. Maybe you could bend the rules a bit with the Perfect Class of Kart . . .
Two readers from the three Newsfield magazines will collect a prize.

Entries please, to **RAINBIRD KART KOMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive by 20th May this year. Best of luck!



Gary Penn

ZZAP! TIPS

Well (I like starting intros with 'well'), well, it's been a pretty hectic month — for me anyway. What with the late arrival of my *Star Gate* arcade machine (ego trip) after some considerable delay, and the hassle of moving in to my new flat, and forgetting my hair-dryer and hairspray when I went down to London to go on Saturday Superstore, and then not actually going on Saturday Superstore after all . . . Yep, March has most certainly been hectic. Actually, while we're on the subject of resetting the 64, I must point out that if using the 'wire thingy wotsit' doesn't work and knackers your computer, then you've touched the wrong pin and blown a fuse — that's all, nothing more. It's your own fault, and I did say if you were unsure to consult the manual or a Reference Guide, so if you got it wrong then you couldn't have known what you were doing, 'cos if you know what you're doing the Reference Guide (or the manual) contains sufficient information to perform the unholy act. So there. But not to worry — it isn't a costly mistake, since it only costs around 30 pee to repair your 64 (not 30 pounds). Yep, that's all a new fuse costs — 30 piddly pence. Anyway, don't do it again — read this months tips instead . . .

Ah, yes — I must point out that there are a few POKEs this month which involve resetting the 64 first. So I thought I'd better warn you beforehand, just in case you got upset and threw a wobbly because you've just fitted a brand spanking new fuse, and inconsiderate little old me is telling (asking) you to go and reset your 64, which you'll probably do, and bang goes your 64 (again), so you have to go out and buy another fuse. You know — life can be so complicated at times . . .

KUNG-FU MASTER (US Gold)

If you're getting really narked 'cos you can't get past the guardian on the third level, or you just don't like the look of certain sprites, try these POKEs from John Barrell of Long Eaton, Nottingham . . .

Load the game as normal and reset the 64, enabling you to enter the following . . .

FOR X=7424 TO 8960:POKE X,0:NEXT (RETURN)

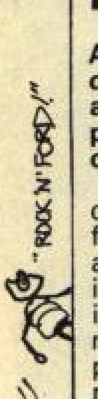
. . . to remove all nasties. Or how about POKEs to remove specific nasties? OK, simply use any of the following values in place of the above pair. For example, if you type in FOR X=8000 TO 8127:POKE X,0:NEXT (RETURN) then it's goodbye to the giant on the third floor.

7424 TO 7487 removes the purple men and the guy with the stick.
7488 TO 7551 removes the knives thrown by the knife thrower.
7552 TO 7615 makes the man with the boomerang walk past on level two.
7616 TO 7619 gets rid of the hunchback on level four and the man at the end of level five.
7744 TO 7807 removes the hunchback on level four.
7808 TO 7999 gets rid of the little men and the girl to be rescued.
8000 TO 8063 removes the giant on the third floor.
8064 TO 8127 gets rid of the bloke with the boomerang.
8128 TO 8319 removes all dragons and exploding balls.
8320 TO 8383 gets rid of the snakes on level two.
8384 TO 8960 removes the bees on level four.

Type SYS 32768 (RETURN) to start the game.

Oh, yes — nearly forgot. Face left on the first level and press SHIFT and G together to gain . . . A handgun! Honest! Hold down SHIFT, and continually tap G for rapid fire. Very useful for disposing of nasty persons brandishing blades and sticks, but only on the first level.

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)



A quick tip from someone who didn't put their name and address on the back of their piece of paper. It works for all opponents . . .

Run to the far right hand corner of the ring and turn to face your opponent. As soon as he approaches you, kick him in the stomach until his energy is completely depleated. Then move round in front of him and providing he's facing you (if not, wait until he turns) grab him, lift him and execute a pile-driver. If all goes well, jump on him and pin him down until he's out for the count. However, you may need to try this a couple of times on Lord Toff as he's a little better than the rest.

KORONIS RIFT (Activision)

Lying around somewhere on the fifth rift (pause while I unknot my tongue) there is a rotofoil. Loot it, install the unit gained and the tune from *Ballblazer* plays!

CAVERNS OF SILLAHC (Interceptor)

Load the game as normal, reset the 64 and enter some POKEs from Derek Fenwick of Southwell, Nottingham . . .

POKE 16805,169:POKE 16806, 0:POKE 16807,234 (RETURN) stops sprite collision detection, while . . .

POKE 16811,169:POKE 16812, 0:POKE 16813,234 (RETURN) stops 'data' collisions. Enter SYS 5000 (RETURN) to start the game at the demo mode.

MOON BUGGY (Anirog)

Derek also supplied some POKEs for this ageing *Moon Patrol* variant. Load *Moon Buggy*, reset the computer and type in the following . . .

POKE 22535,169:POKE 22536, 0:POKE 22537,234 (RETURN) to stop sprite collision detection, or . . .

POKE 22535,169:POKE 22536, 252:POKE 22537,234 (RETURN) so that one shot kills everything on screen. SYS 5120 (RETURN) starts the game.

SKYJET (Mastertronic)

Well, lawks alawdy! Bless my soul! What do we have here but POKEs for one of Mastertronic's better budget titles, courtesy of Stephen Kay from Stalybridge in Cheshire.

Load the game as normal, and reset the computer (apologies to those of you who abhor this form of violence) to enter these POKEs . . .

POKE 27792,number of lives (1-255) (RETURN)
Or even . . .
POKE 27016,234 (RETURN)
POKE 27017,234 (RETURN)
POKE 27018,234 (RETURN)
. . . for infinite lives. Then again, you could . . .
POKE 27163,96 (RETURN)
. . . to get rid of the flashing screen sequence when you die. Anyway, be sure to type in SYS 29350 (RETURN) to start the game.

AUTOMANIA (Mikrogen)

Dig out your copy of *Automania*, blow off the dust and stick the cassette in the tape deck. Ensure that it's rewound and type in LOAD "",1,1 (RETURN). Press play on tape and wait for the first part of the game to load. Now enter these POKEs from Mark Fielding of Devizes, Wiltshire . . .

POKE 2212,194 (RETURN)
POKE 2213,8 (RETURN)
POKE 2243,236 (RETURN)
POKE 2244,141 (RETURN)
POKE 2245,137 (RETURN)
POKE 2246,87 (RETURN)
POKE 2247,76 (RETURN)
POKE 2248,241 (RETURN)
POKE 2249,9 (RETURN)
. . . and type RUN (RETURN) to load the rest of the game. Once it has loaded and run, you will have infinite Wallies at your disposal!

RAMBO (Ocean)

You wouldn't believe how many letters I've received with tips for the third section of this game. Apparently there's a bug which can help you get through to the end. Wow. Here's the three most popular variations on the theme . . .

When the message 'YOUR PRESENCE HAS BEEN RELAYED TO ENEMY HQ — A GUNSHIP IS NOW ON COURSE AND IN PURSUIT' is printed up on screen, try any one of the following:

1) Select ROCKET LAUNCHER, press RETURN and push forward on the joystick.
2) Plug a second joystick into port 1 and push it forward while pulling back on the other joystick.
3) Press the left hand SHIFT key in conjunction with the cursor up/down key, and push the joystick forward.

Your chopper should now shoot up the screen twice as fast, making it easier to avoid the enemy gunship. Great! But could I get any of the above to work? Nope, not a sausage. Oh well, see how you get on . . .

JET SET WILLY (Software Projects)

Get your *JSW* cassette, stick it in the tape deck and rewind it. Then, when you're feeling up to it, type in the following listing:

```
1 SYS 63276:PRINT CHR$(147)
10 POKE 783,1:POKE 830,34:POKE 832,48:SYS 62828:POKE 53265,PEEK (53265) AND 239
11 FOR I=0 TO 12:READ X:POKE 1280+I,X:NEXT
12 POKE 8941,0:POKE 8942,5:POKE 8945,76:POKE 8946,0:POKE 8947,5
13 POKE 8950,76:POKE 8951,0:POKE 8952,5:POKE 8953,76:POKE 8954,0:POKE 8955,5
27 FOR K=679 TO 779:POKE K,PEEK (8192+K)
28 A=A+1:IF A=99 THEN 30
29 NEXT
30 POKE 778,PEEK (8192+99):POKE 779,PEEK (8192+100):STOP
100 DATA 169, 27, 141, 17, 208, 169
110 DATA 85, 141, 98, 242, 76, 160, 15
```

Done that? Good. Now check through it for errors. OK? Great. Type in RUN (RETURN) **and press play on tape to load and run *JSW*. The POKEs fix the wine cellar bug, and were supplied by** Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Middlesex. Ta, Ian — but have you any POKEs for infinite lives?**

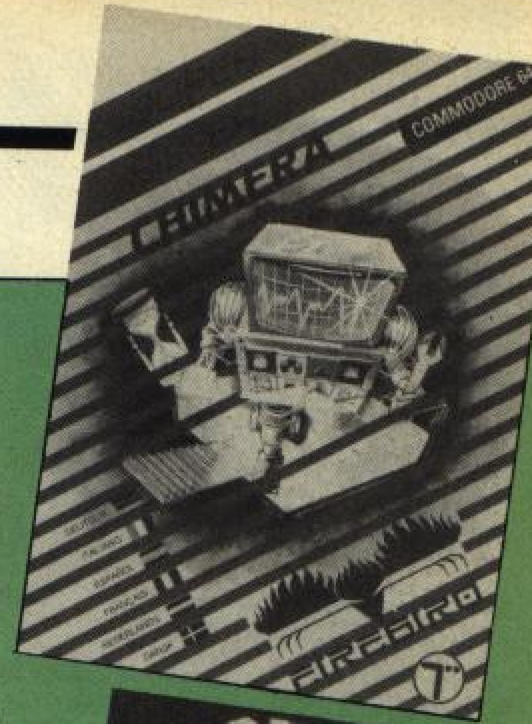
GRAHAM GOOCH'S TEST CRICKET (Audiogenic)

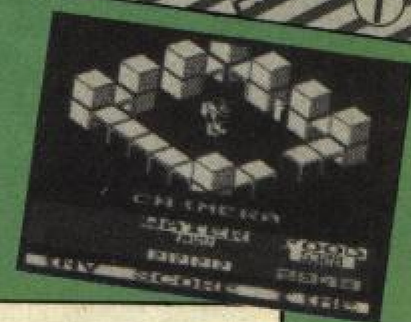
Bruce Godfrey **from Brisbane, Queensland, Australia supplied this short, but useful tip . . .**
'Just thought I'd tell you about a little cheat I found in Graham Goch's Test Cricket. The trick is to always bowl at maximum strength down the leg side. By continually doing this you will eventually get the Australian team out for 0 (sob sob). If only I could reverse the situation — I get sick of England winning. PS This tip works at any level of the game.'
Gee, thanks Bruce.

KANE (Mastertronic)

When on the horse jumping screens, hold down F1 to continually increase your score by 2 points. Naughty, but nice.

CHIMERA (Firebird)

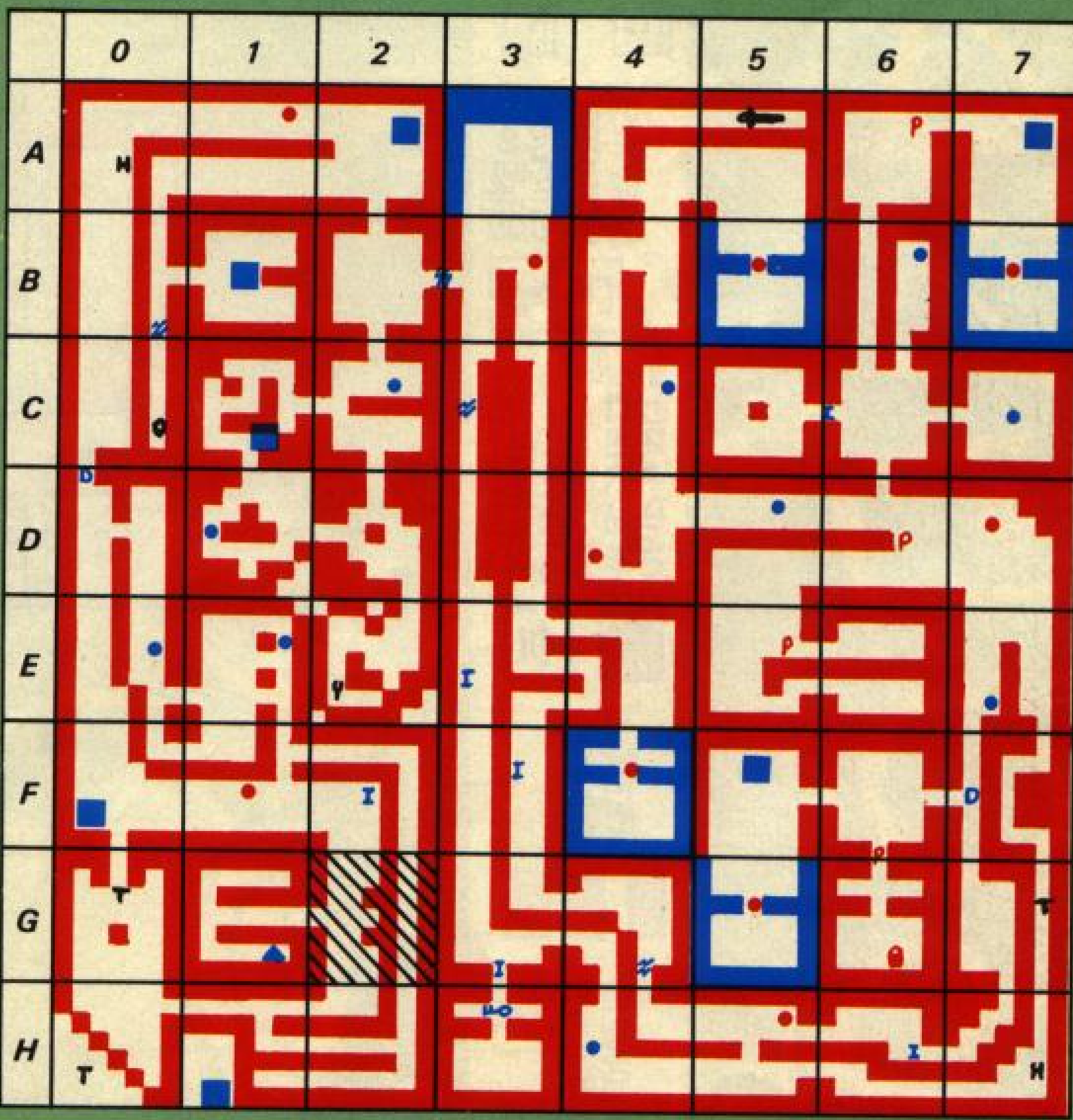


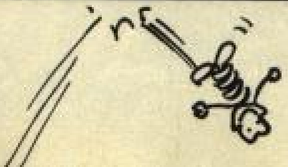


Here's the map and complete solution from Michael Ager **of Middleton, Manchester . . .**

MISSILE 1
Get the spanner from E2 and eliminate the force field in B2, C3, G4 and B0. Get the nut from C0 to form a warhead, and take it to the blue room F4.
MISSILE 2
Get the bread from H5 and eliminate the toaster in G7 and G3. Replenish food and water with the bread and the cup to gain access to the key in H3. Unlock the door in D0 and A4, and eliminate Pandora's box in D6, E5 and A6. Unlock the door in F7, and eliminate Pandora's box in F6. Put the key in the padlock in G6 to form a warhead, and take it to the blue room G5.
MISSILE 3
Get the torch from A5 and go to the dark room G2. Press the fire button to form a warhead, and take it to the blue room B5.
MISSILE 4
Get the pyramid from G1, and eliminate the hourglass in C6. Get the object in C5 to form the last warhead, and take it to the blue room B7.
To complete the game, go to the green room A3 — but hurry!

KEY:
- WATER
- BREAD
- SPANNER
- NUT
- RADIATOR
- T TOASTER
- DARK ROOM
- P PANDORA'S BOX
- D DOOR
- PYRAMID
- TORCH
- PADLOCK
- I HOURGLASS (REVERSE FLOWING)
- KEY
- H HELP
- FORCEFIELDS

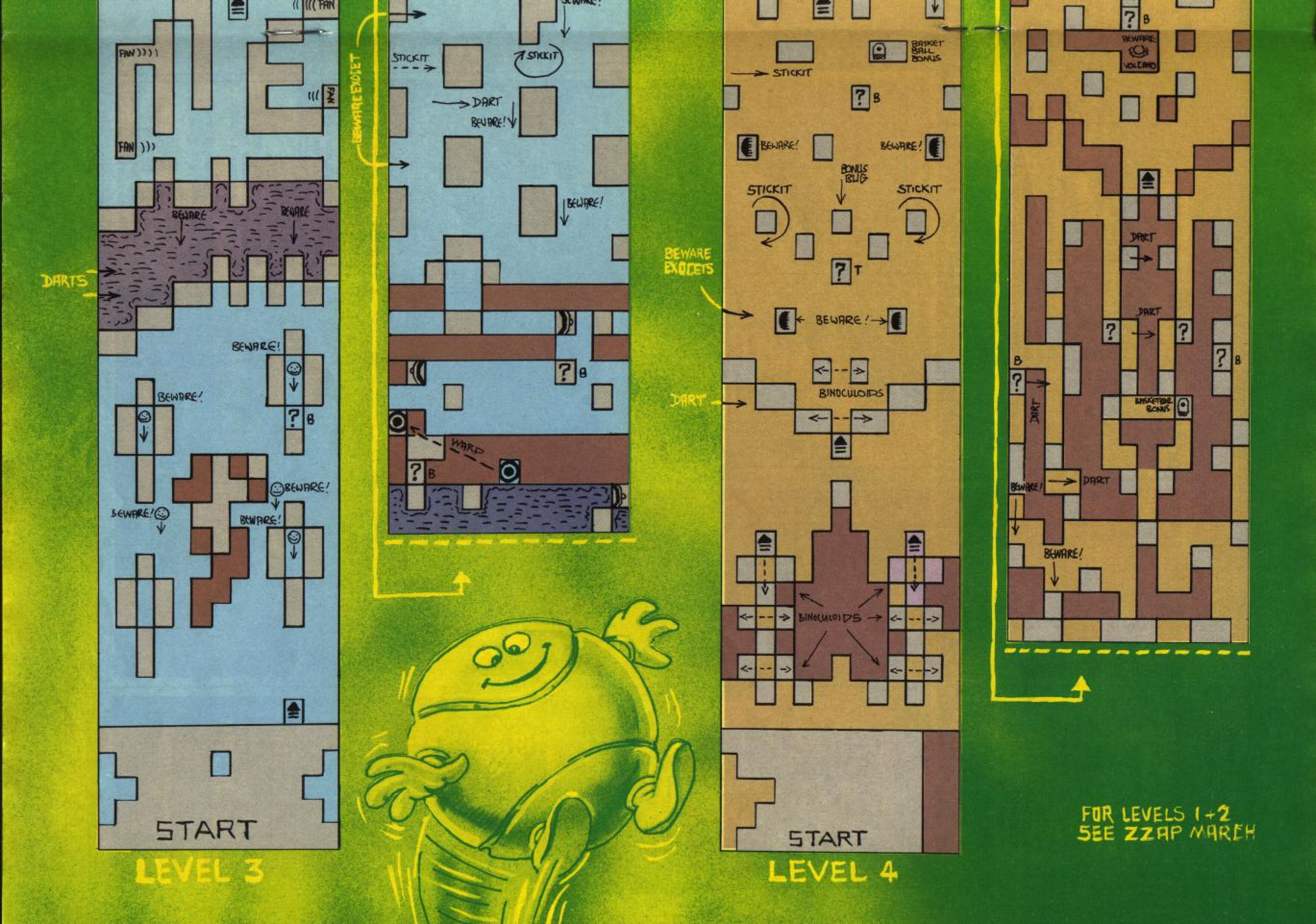




BOUNDER THE MAP

LEVELS 3+4





FAN
DARTS
BEWARE
BEWARE!
STICKIT
DART
WARP
BEWARE EXOCET
BEWARE EXOCETS
BASKET BALL BONUS
BONUS BUG
BINOCULOIDS
VOLCANO
BASKETBALL BONUS
START
LEVEL 3
LEVEL 4
FOR LEVELS 1+2
SEE ZZAP MARCH

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE DISCOVERY KIT (Activision)

Getting tired of your Pet Person? Fancy a change? Well, all you ungrateful persons who own a house on a DISK, can thank Nick Clarkson **of Chichester in West Sussex who supplied this short listing**

```
10 A=RND(-TI)
20 PRINT "SEARCHING FOR A NEW PET PERSON"
30 OPEN 15,8,15,"I0"
40 OPEN 2,8,2,"#"
50 PRINT#15,"B-P:"2;0;0
60 FOR I=0 TO 255:PRINT #2,CHR$(PEEK(2560+I));
:NEXT
70 PRINT#15,"U2:"2;0;1;4
80 PRINT# 15,"B-P:"2;0;0:
PRINT # 15,"U1:"2;0;18;17:
PRINT#15,"B-P:"2;0;0
90 FOR I=1 TO 8:PRINT #2,CHR$(48+INT(RND(1)*
15));:NEXT
100 PRINT#15,"U2:"2;0;18;17
110 CLOSE 2:CLOSE 15
120 PRINT "YOUR OLD PET PERSON HAS BEEN EVICTED"
130 PRINT "THE HOUSE IS NOW FREE FOR A NEW LODGER"
```

Make sure that what you've typed in is error free before inserting your house on a disk into the disk drive and typing RUN (RETURN)**. Wait until you are told that your Pet Person has been evicted, then turn your 64 off and on, and boot up your LCP disk as normal. Et voila!**



ONE MAN AND HIS DROID (Mastertronic)

Now what tips section could possibly be deemed complete without some POKEs from Gary Saunders **of Colchester, Essex. Eh? Well, I can't think of one, so out of the kindness of Gary's heart, here are some POKEs for infinite time. Rewind the tape to the beginning and enter . . .**

POKE 43,200:LOAD (RETURN)

Press play on tape, and when a SYNTAX ERROR **occurs type in the following:**

POKE 43,1 (RETURN)

70 POKE 49212,248:POKE 49213,252:SYS 49152 (RETURN)

Now type RUN (RETURN) **to load the game. When the 64 resets, type in this line:**

FOR A=22392 TO 22461:POKE A,234:NEXT (RETURN)

To start the game, type SYS 19682 (RETURN)

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)

Rewind the cassette to the beginning and type in this short listing . . .

```
10 PRINT CHR$(147)
20 FOR A=272 TO 306:READ B:POKE A,B:NEXT A
30 SYS 272
40 DATA 238, 32, 208, 169, 1, 170, 168
50 DATA 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 133, 183
60 DATA 32, 213, 255, 169, 76, 141, 209
70 DATA 3, 169, 102, 141, 210, 3, 169
80 DATA 254, 141, 210, 3, 76, 174, 2
```

Make sure there are no errors, and if everything looks okey doke type RUN (RETURN), **press play on tape and wait for** *Who Dare Wins II* **to load. When the** READY **prompt appears you can type in some POKEs . . .**

POKE 5941,169:POKE 5942,0: POKE 5943,234 (RETURN) **to become impervious to bullets, or . . .**

POKE 6694,169:POKE 6695,0: POKE 6696,234 (RETURN) **to be able to walk over water, quicksand and trenches! Typing** SYS 16384 (RETURN) **starts the game.**

ROBIN OF THE WOOD (Odin)

How about lots of luverly lives for the wasting? Yeah? OK, type LOAD (RETURN)**, press play on tape, and wait for the first part of the game to load. What's that? Yes, it does help if you put the** *Robin of the Wood* **tape in the tape deck first. Great. Now enter these POKEs sent in by** Superman **(?) from the Essex Cracking Service (something to do with eggs?) . . .**

POKE 1007,167 (RETURN)
POKE 1008,2 (RETURN)
POKE 679,169 (RETURN)
POKE 680,251 (RETURN)
POKE 681,141 (RETURN)
POKE 682,220 (RETURN)
POKE 683,8 (RETURN)
POKE 684,169 (RETURN)
POKE 685,252 (RETURN)
POKE 686,141 (RETURN)
POKE 687,221 (RETURN)
POKE 688,8 (RETURN)
POKE 689,32 (RETURN)
POKE 690,128 (RETURN)
POKE 691,8 (RETURN)
POKE 692,96 (RETURN)

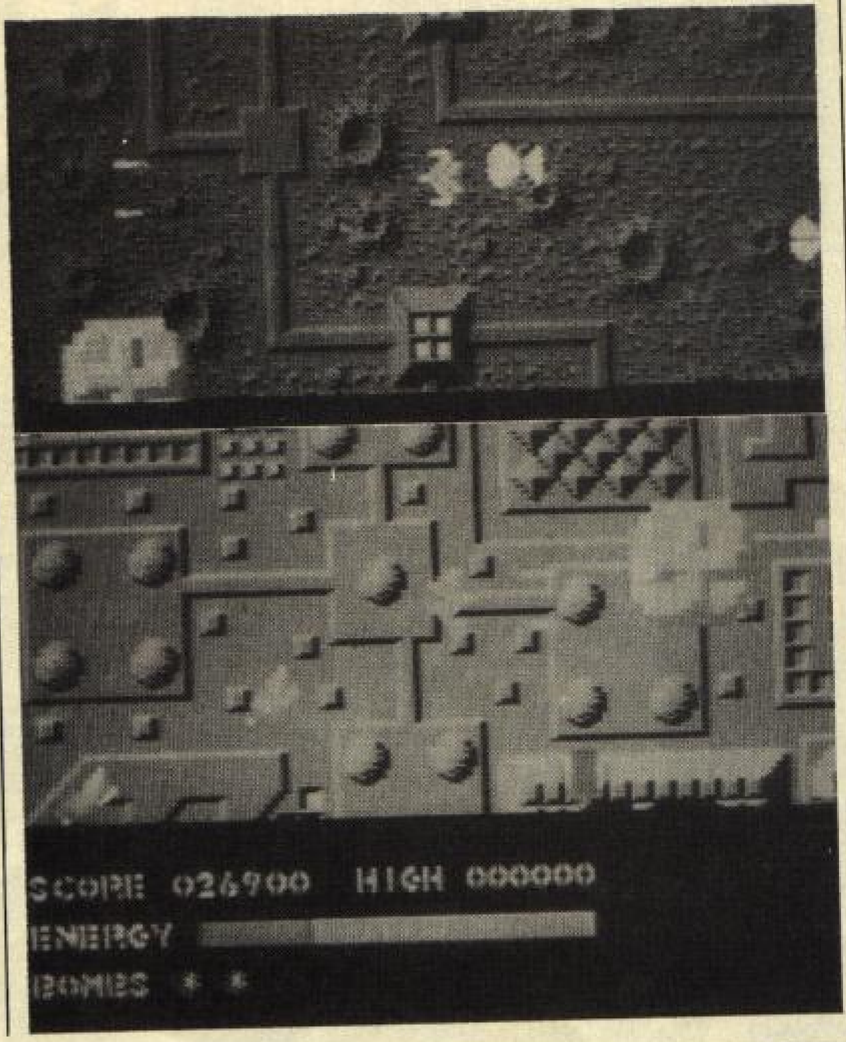
. . . and type RUN (RETURN) **to load the rest of the game. Once the computer has reset you can type in some more POKEs, such as . . .**

POKE 36391**,number of lives** (1-255) (RETURN)

or:

POKE 40857,234 (RETURN)
POKE 40858,234 (RETURN)

for infinite lives. SYS 16384 (RETURN) **starts the game.**



GUARDIAN (Alligata)

Gary also had the good sense to send in some POKEs for Steve Evans' classic shoot em up . . .

Right, rewind your *Guardian* **tape to the beginning, then type in this listing . . .**

```
10 X=0:FOR A=0 TO 34:READ C:POKE 52224+A,C
20 X=X+C:NEXT A
30 IF X<>4643 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":END
40 SYS 52227
50 DATA 76, 174, 2, 169, 1, 170, 168, 32
60 DATA 186, 255, 169, 0, 133, 183, 32, 213
70 DATA 255, 169, 76, 141, 209, 3, 169, 248
80 DATA 141, 210, 3, 169, 252, 141, 211, 3
90 DATA 76, 0, 204
```

Check through for errors before typing RUN (RETURN)**. Press play on tape when prompted and wait for** *Guardian* **to load. The 64 will reset, allowing you to enter these POKEs . . .**

POKE 24756,234 (RETURN)
POKE 24757,234 (RETURN)
POKE 24758,234 (RETURN)
POKE 24759,96 (RETURN)

. . . to disable sprite/sprite collisions. Better still, you can type in . . .

POKE 17388,49 (RETURN)

. . . to make the game even faster! The normal value is 129, just in case you find things a bit too hetic. Enter SYS 24765 (RETURN) **to start the game.**

Oh, yes. Before I forget, here are some POKEs from Dermot Hegarty **of Creggan, Derry, N Ireland. Enter them after the 64 resets . . .**

POKE 21050,169 (RETURN)
POKE 21051,0 (RETURN)
POKE 21052,234 (RETURN)
POKE 21053,234 (RETURN)
POKE 21054,234 (RETURN)

Don't forget to SYS 24765 (RETURN) **to start the game.**

WINTER GAMES (US Gold/Epyx)

In the Figure Skating, keep facing left and falling over to get a maximum score of 6.0 when the time is up.

Z (Rino)

After loading your copy of *Z***, reset the computer and enter some of Superman's POKEs . .**

POKE 2440**,number of lives** (1-255) (RETURN)

Or:

POKE 6139,234 (RETURN)
POKE 6140,234 (RETURN)
POKE 6141,234 (RETURN)

. . . for infinite lives. SYS 2304 (RETURN) **to start.**

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MERCENARY (Novagen)

Since its release, *Mercenary* has stirred up a great deal of interest and as a result the tips have been coming in thick and fast. So, with the help of SD Davies **of Anfield, Liverpool,** Christopher Hester **of Stockport, Cheshire,** Kinnon Paterson **of Marton, Middlesbrough, and** Tim Mason **of Hallow, Worcester, here's a selection of cool hints along with a couple of 'cheats'** . . .

A few people have written in with methods of 'rearranging' objects, and all say roughly the same thing . . . Fly up to the Palyar Colony Craft, leave your ship, walk off the edge and drop your stuff as you fall. Well, yes, but that isn't actually the correct method. Look again at the screen shot — the objects are actually scattered AROUND the Commodore sign. Firstly, if objects are dropped as you fall they form a vertical line, not a horizontal ring as in the picture, and secondly, the Commodore sign isn't within the viscinity of the Colony Craft. So, the facility to arrange objects in such a manner as seen in the screen shot is yet to be discovered . . . Will you be the first?

An interesting little cheat . . . Drop all objects and get the kitchen sink. You can now pick up virtually anything, such as skull and crossbones symbols, spacecraft, objects already sold, and the spider's web, which can also be used to open any locked doors! Apparently, the sink has other uses, in fact there are still several unusual features to be found in Mercenary — can anyone oblige?

If you should be unlucky enough to fall out of the Colony Craft and are in possession of the cheese, don't despair — press L to stop you falling, drop the cheese and board it. You can now fly around!

Believe it or not, it is possible to return to Targ after you've escaped! Once the congratulatory message has been given, keep pressing D to drop all objects, and then press L to leave the ship. Wait for the elevation dial to fall to zero before pressing CTRL and Q together, and you will find yourself back on Targ with a new ship! You can now continue playing, even though the 'GAME OVER' message is constantly displayed! The reason for dropping all objects is so that when you press CTRL and Q, they aren't scattered about the landscape. This can also be used during the game, so you can pick up a new ship whenever you want!

After crashing on the planet Targ for the first time, don't touch either joystick or keyboard to instigate some humourous responses from Benson.

If you've destroyed the Encounter sign and try to leave the planet you will be told 'The author won't let you leave until you fix his advert', so either don't shoot the sign or repair it first with the anti-time bomb.

It is possible to drop objects when using the elevators, so that they appear in mid-air! However, sometimes objects can be lost, so take care.

When attacked by an enemy ship, fly backwards at a speed of -625 so that it follows you and can then be picked off at will. However, if it fires, accelerate to avoid the missile. Better still, crash into the ground so that when you get shot your ship doesn't get blown up, only you do!

There is a ship flying back and forth between locations 00,00 and 00,15, at an altitude of 500, and a speed of 100. It is in fact the Palyar Commander's Brother-In-Law's New Ship, as revealed on destroying it!

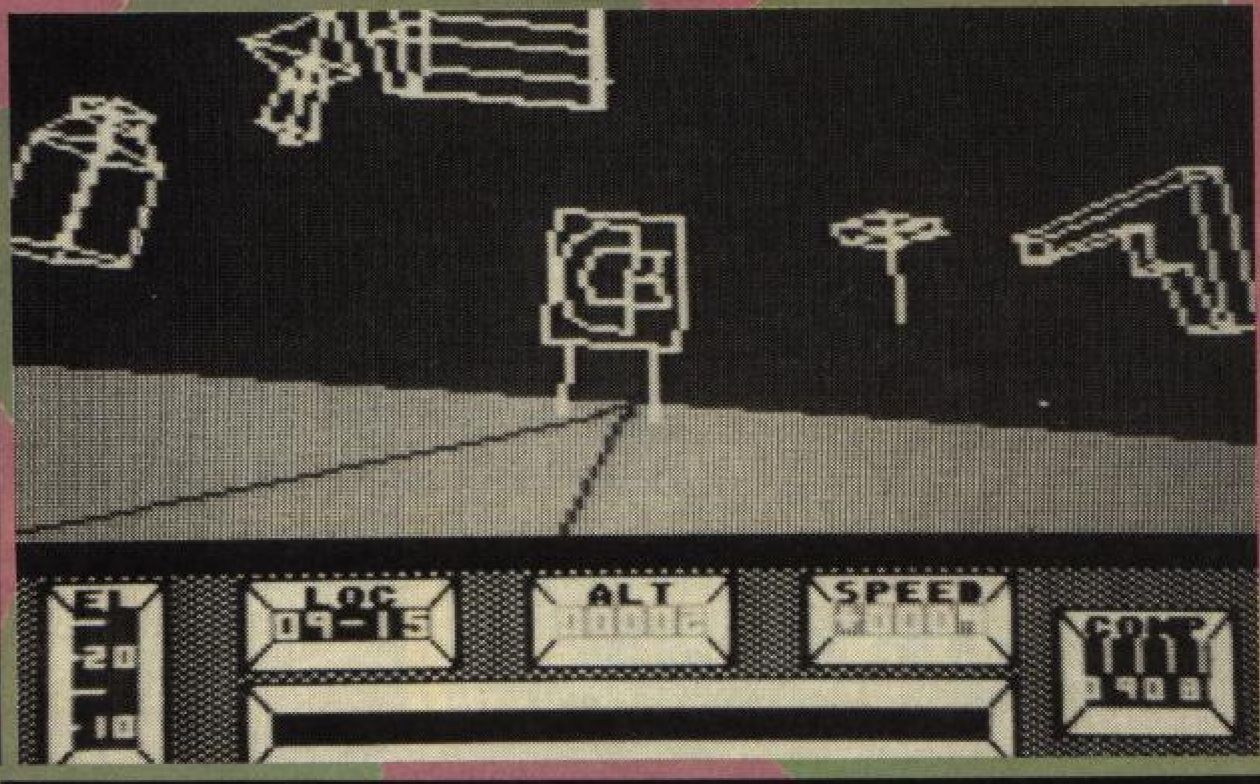
Doors with a diagonal line from the top left to the bottom right are transporter exits only. Doors with a line from the top right to the bottom left are transporter entrances only, and doors marked with a cross take you either way.

Here's a list of the various objects and their uses . . .
The ANTENNA makes the radio in the Communications Room work.
The ANTIGRAV enables you to pick up very heavy objects, such as ships.
The ANTI-TIME BOMB is used to reassemble any buildings previously destroyed. Just fire at the wreckage and it will rebuild in front of your very eyes!
The PHOTON EMITTER acts as a torch.
The SIGHTS are only useful for helping your aim.
The METAL DETECTOR changes the colour of the information panel according to who owns a particular building. RED means that no-one owns it, GREEN means it is under Palyar occupation and BLUE means it is owned by Mechanoids. By the way, destroying all of the Mechanoid buildings results in a 500,000 credit reward from the Palyars.!
The POWERAMP boosts the speed of the Dominion Dart to that of the cheese, but it must be carried permanently to do so.
The NOVADRIVE enables the Intergalactic Craft to function.

Where all the smart *Mercenary* players are dropping their things, and for how much . . .
Drop the CATERING PROVISIONS in the KITCHEN for 60,000 credits.
Drop the GOLD in the EXCHEQUER for 100,000 credits.
Drop the ESSENTIAL 12939 SUPPLY (PEPSI) in the CONFERENCE ROOM for 50,000 credits.
Drop the MECHANOID LEADER in the Palyar Interview Room for 250,000 credits. BUT, if you want to sell things to the Mechanoids, be sure you haven't sold their leader to the Palyars beforehand, since they won't be interested.
Drop the MEDICAL SUPPLIES in the INFIRMARY for 40,000 credits.
Drop the DATABANK in the CONTROL ROOM for 100,000 credits.
Drop the WINCHESTER in the MECHANOID LABORATORY for 250,000 credits.
Drop the NEUTRON FUEL in the MECHANOID ENGINE ROOM for 250,000 credits.
Drop the ENERGY CRYSTAL in the MECHANOID POWER ROOM for 100,000 credits.
Drop the USEFUL ARMAMENT in the MECHANOID ARMOURY for 120,000 credits..
Drop the LARGE BOX in the MECHANOID STORES for 80,000 credits.

If you shoot NOVABILL you are given the message 'WELL DONE', but has he any other function? What about the PYRAMID at location 75,39? Or the COFFIN? How about the STRANGE SPACESHIP at location 34,11? Does anyone know if these objects can be used for anything?

Two ways of escaping from Targ (condensed) . . .
The first method is to rent a spaceship from Hertz, and the second . . . Go to the hangar at location 81,35, armed with lots of keys (or the spider's web) and the photon emitter. There are two transporter doors here — go through the left hand one to appear at location 03,15. Wander around until you find a door with a skull and crossbones on it (yes, go on, take the sign if you've got the kitchen sink). Behind this door (it is safe to enter, providing you've got the photon emitter) there is the Interstellar Ship, which can be used in conjunction with the Novadrive to leave the planet. You will also need the Pass (a square with a P on it) to leave the hangar. This can be found in a room adjacent to the hangar. But what's the third method?



Craft Type	Location	Top Land Speed	TOP AIR SPEED
Dominion Dart	08,08	1650	4950
Dominion Dart (with Poweramp)		3300	9900
Palyar Diamond	03,00	1650	1650
Jet	**,**	825	7400
Cheese	11,13	3300	9900
Land Dart	09,05	3837	—
Car	12,13	825	—
Intergalactic Craft	03,15	—	Escape Velocity

Hangar Colour	Location
Blue	03,00
Yellow	03,15 (pass required)
Brown	09,05
Red	09,06
Orange	11,13
Yellow	81,35 (outside city)
Grey	**,** (outside city)

Well (I like starting outros with 'well'), well, that's all I've got time for this month. Tune in next month for more of the same — the hottest hints, the coolest POKEs, the sweatiest armpits. Don't forget to keep them tips 'n' things comin' in, but no SAEs — please!

Send your stuff to **ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB,** and remember to include ZZAP! MAGAZINE in the address, 'cos the Post Sorting Persons throw a fit if you forget. In fact, Pat 'n' Doreen recently threatened that they wouldn't open any more mail because some prune didn't state ZZAP! MAGAZINE on the envelope. They wrote ZZAP! TIPS at the top, but did they put ZZAP! MAGAZINE? No — they went straight into the 'PO BOX 10' bit, and caused total chaos in the Mail Order Post Sorting Department. Poor old Pat didn't know which way to turn, and Doreen was well annoyed I can tell you. So, whoever it was DON'T DO IT AGAIN! — slap.


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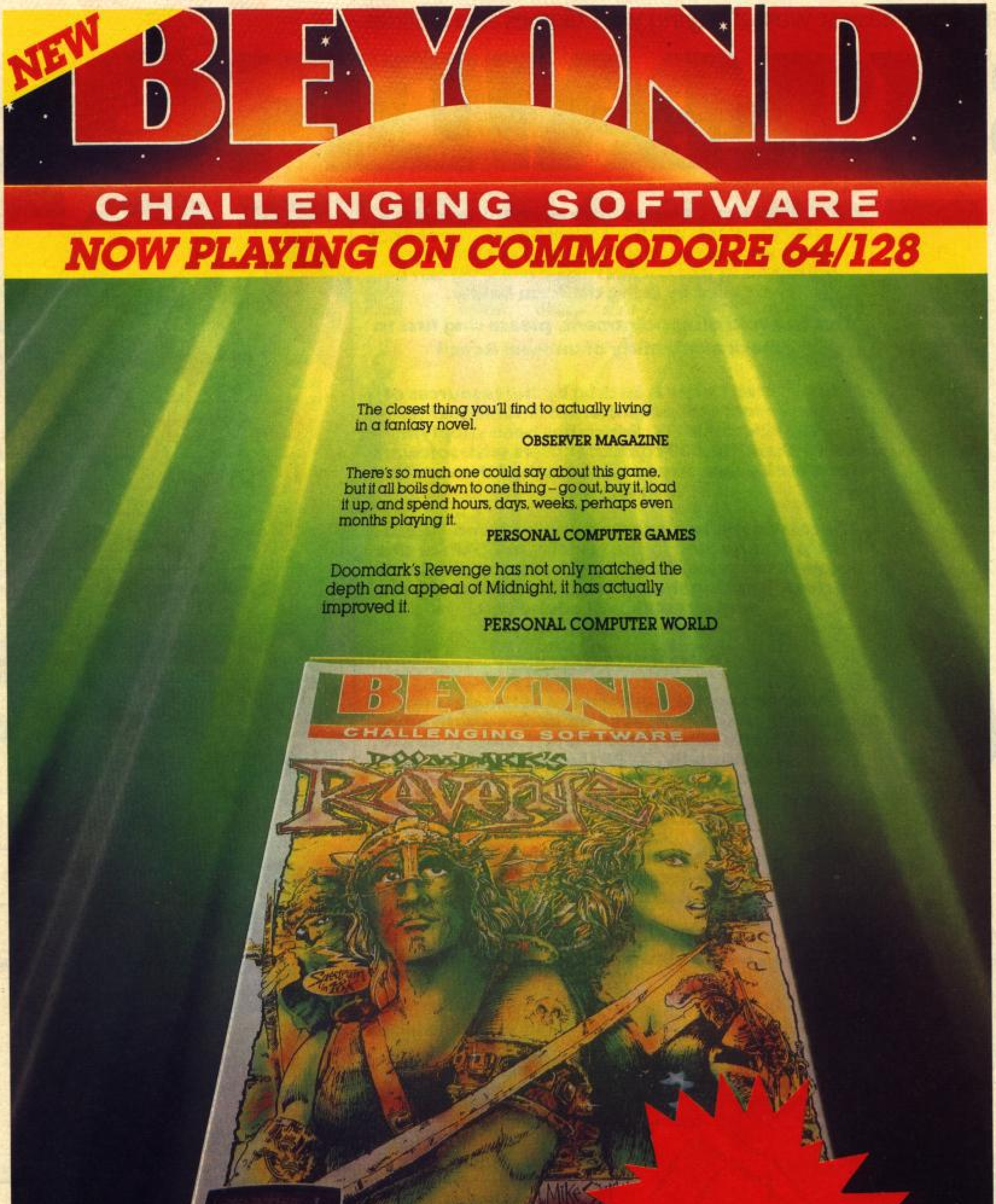
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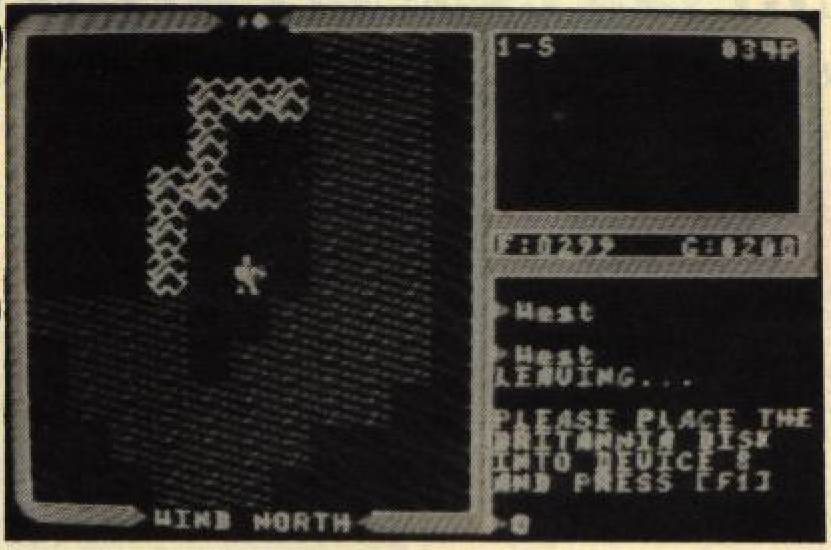

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A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.

ZZAP! adventure



Howdy-do there, all you Whizzard fans. This month ol' Whitey has dredged the very depths of Hell to bring you a review of *Lucifer's Realm* from All-American Adventures; struggled with *Mission Asteroid*, and gone on his own private *Odyssey*. So, if you want to catch up with all that's new this month on the adventure scene, read on for reviews, news, and tips from the man with the wand and the off-white beard . . .



ULTIMA IV

SIZZLER

Import Only

We've already seen *Ultima II* in these hallowed columns. Now it's time to gloss over a few thousand years of software development and take a gander at *Ultima IV*, thanks to Tony Treadwell of *Trollbound* fame who has kindly sent me his recently imported copy.

Unfortunately, *Ultima IV* isn't available here yet, unless you're prepared to pay nearly fifty pounds for an imported copy. However, these games usually make it over here sooner or later and then you should expect to pay about £20 for it.

These games are in the D&D format, which is to say that you choose a character for yourself and then sally forth with a few friends to either plunder and pillage, or else uphold all the principles of law and order. *Ultima IV* is subtitled *The Quest of the Avatar*, and although the graphics aren't exactly stunning, they do the job, combining with a wide number of playing options and a whopping great map to give all D&D'ers a run for their money.

Nice touches about the game include the music, suitably pre-Renaissance, and in particular the manner in which you choose your character. Normally this involves a rather mundane choice between various different attributes, but Lord British has excelled himself in this game by having you attend a fair where you are given a Tarot reading by a mystical lady. Your choice of cards and the manner in which you answer her questions determines your characteristics for the game.

At this point, I'll let my honourable demi-Wizard Tony Treadwell take over the story . . .

'The game comes in a very nice box which is filled to the brim with books, disks, reference cards, more books, and a lovely cloth map, which feels and looks similar to a lavish dish-cloth!

The program itself takes up four disk sides, one for the introduction, which is very pretty indeed, one for the world of Brittania, another for the Towns, Cities, Castles, and Villages, and the last for the massive underground net-

"COME 'ERE!"





work of caves, mazes, and dungeons.

The layout is very similar to *Ultima III*, with the main part of the screen taken up with the view, two smaller boxes for character status, and one for action messages.

On your travels you can enter dwellings and transact with the different people (all with different names). Each town or city includes different types of religions, races and so on, and your first task is to build up a party of up to eight characters, ranging from Paladins to Tinkers and wizards. To do this you travel the lands, entering cities and talking to folk, asking them to join you.

The game shows some interesting features. For instance, if you run around from town to town stealing the royal treasures, you become very dishonest. The programme recognises this and some characters refuse to join you. Other traits are similarly significant — there's a character called Geoffrey, for example, who won't even consider joining you if you retreat from battle every time you encounter an enemy!

A book of spells with no less than 70 pages is at your side, telling you which magical herbs create which spells when mixed together. Over 30 different spells can be mixed, and all but two of the herbs can be bought at any magical shop. The other two you'll have to search around for — very necessary, since they're vital for success.

There's also, of course, a comprehensive guide to playing the game, with a short history of the land, different characters, and their skills. You're also given plenty of information about the monsters you should be watching out for!

Ultima IV is a great challenge and will take many months to complete. For this reason I would recommend the game to avid adventurers, even at the imported price of £49. Others will just have to wait for this excellent title to be imported at a (hopefully) lower price.'

Atmosphere 93%
Interaction 89%
Lasting Interest 94%
Value for Money 68%
Overall 90%

MISSION ASTEROID

US Gold, £14.95 disk only

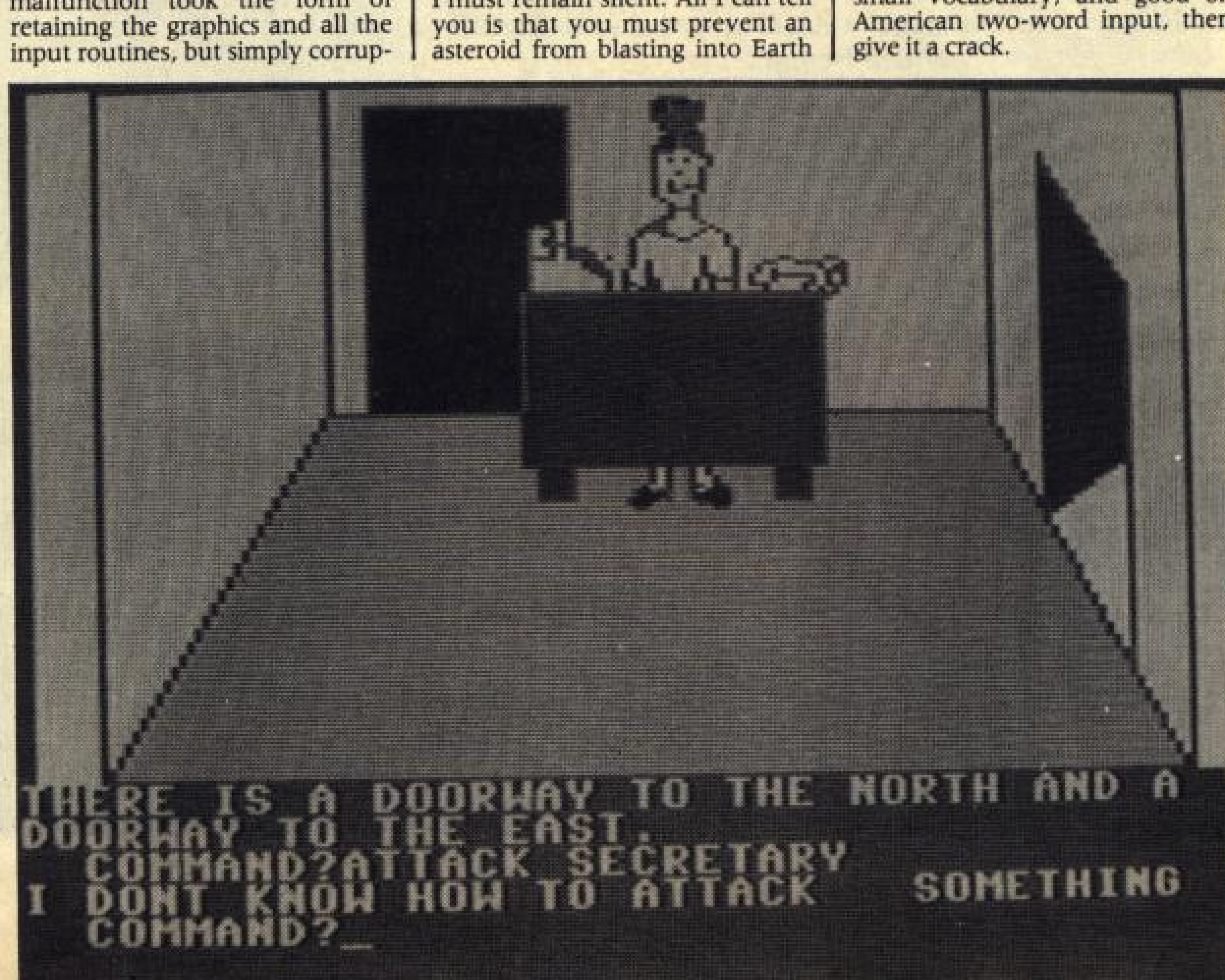
This US Gold offering looks rather similar in layout to *Ulysses*, which we've already seen in this column and which the Wiz did not, frankly, get much satisfaction from. Sierra On-Line seem to have a hand in dull graphics and small vocabularies, and I'm afraid *Mission Asteroid* falls very much into this category.

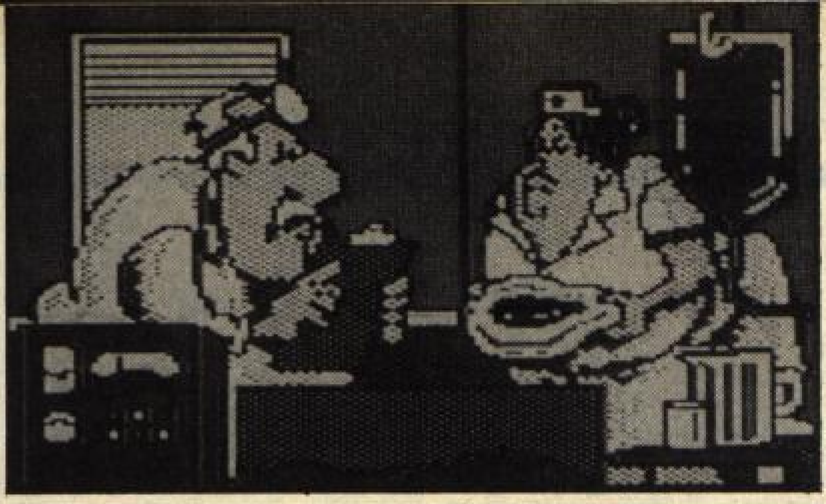


However, I can't be too rude about it because I couldn't play much of it. I'd already failed to load one copy of this game, and Hey Presto, this version crashed after a couple of minutes. The malfunction took the form of retaining the graphics and all the input routines, but simply corrupting the text display so that I couldn't read anything.

That said, is the fact that I still managed to move around a compliment, an insult to the game's complexity, or of no significance? I can certainly tell you that the vocabulary is rather small and the pictures are rather dull. Apart from the basic storyline, however, I must remain silent. All I can tell you is that you must prevent an asteroid from blasting into Earth with catastrophic effects by shooting off in your space craft and zapping it with whatever you can find that will do the trick.

As plots go, it sounds quite good. Unfortunately as the text goes, it went. Perhaps US Gold will send me yet another copy, and In the meantime if you think you can handle lack-lustre graphics, a small vocabulary, and good ol' American two-word input, then give it a crack.









LUCIFER'S REALM

US Gold, £14.95 disk only

Here's another of those American games that promise great things by: a) coming from the same country as Infocom and b) coming on disk. I guess this is the general thinking behind marketing these sort of games in the UK at inflated prices, but frankly after playing games like *Ulysses* and (even worse) *Ripper*, I think this general thinking needs a bit of a revision.

However, the good news is that *Lucifer's Realm* is actually quite novel, though you shouldn't expect anything on the stunning side except for some of the graphics. The plot is hilarious: you find yourself in hospital and all of a sudden the Doc says to the Nurse 'He's going to die very soon.' Sure enough, next moment you're knocking on the Pearly Gates and having judgement passed upon you . . .

I don't have to tell you (do I?) that all those vile deeds you swept under the carpet are immediately tipped into the balance, and you find yourself with a one way ticket to Down Under — a fiery pit that makes an Australian bar just before closing seem like a deserted Caribbean beach. All you can hear are the screams of lost souls — presumably crying out for water and Band-Aid — and all you can see are flames, flames, and more flames! Try getting out of THAT with only two word input!

The program kicks off with some rather novel digitised pictures of the programmers, giving the whole affair something of a movie atmosphere. Once you find yourself in Hell, you have to stay on the hop in a bid to escape from the first location, but after that moving around gets fairly easy. Once you've cracked the first two puzzles the full absurdity of the plot hits you: Adolf Hitler has got together an army and is trying to overthrow sweet, soft-centred ol' Satan.

Lucifer then offers anyone who can present him with conclusive proof of Mr Hitler's intentions, a safe passage back upstairs to Paradise, and since no-one else seems interested it's up to you to get your elbows dirty and your eyebrows singed.

The display is rather unusual and slightly limiting — the graphics occupy most of the screen except for a small text window at the bottom of the display that shows the computer's last response. Hitting any key clears the graphics and shows you a textscreen with details of your inventory, what you can see, and an input line. You enter your (short) command, hit RETURN, and the graphics flip back on with the response below.

Sadly the humour of the plot and the excellence of some of the graphics do not deter from the rather basic nature of the program. The vocabulary is extremely limited and the inputs allowed are similarly restricted. Verb/noun is as far as you can go — and sometimes you don't even get that far! The responses are also short and barely to the point — 'Try something else', says the computer in response to just about everything it either doesn't understand or doesn't consider appropriate. Not very helpful.

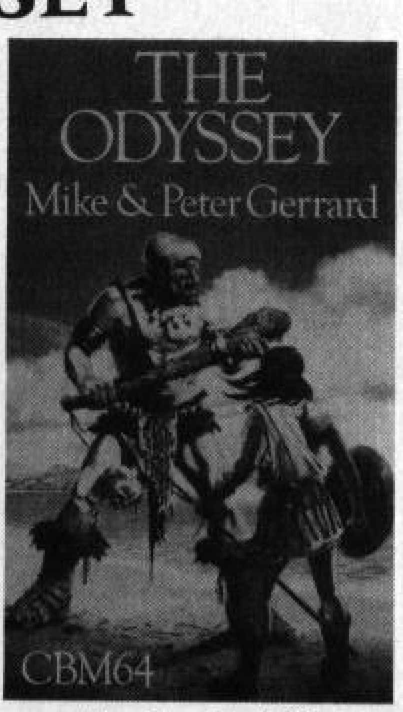
The location descriptions are also extremely short, one-sentence affairs, but then I guess you're meant to be looking at the graphics, not reading the text.

Despite these shortcomings, however, the Wiz had quite a few laughs over this program. If you're not being vapourised by Adolph Eichmann, you're nattering away to John Wilkes Booth (who assassinated Lincoln), or flushing yourself down Stygian drains. This game isn't anywhere near Infocom standard (or Activision, or even Level 9), but it stays on my shelf until I've got that Nazi swine up to the shoulders in lava.

Atmosphere 72%
Interaction 45%
Lasting Interest 58%
Value for money 50%
Overall 58%

THE ODYSSEY

Duckworth, £9.95 cass



This is the latest effort from the den of Duckworth, producers of such all-time classics as *Mountain Palace Adventure* and *Castle Dracula*. It changes hands for £9.95 and comes in a bulky video cassette sized case, with two cassettes and minimal instructions on the back of the packet.

In fact, the minimal instructions are a subtle hint about the quality of the game. We've become accustomed these days to wading through pages of blurb on how to communicate with the latest whizz-bang parsers from Level 9, Melbourne House, Infocom and others, but Duckworth are still in the verb-noun era, so there really isn't much to say, apart from telling you to hit the SHIFT/RUN STOP keys to load the game, and how to SAVE a game.

The Odyssey is divided into two parts. The story has been adapted by Mike Gerrard from the very stuff of myth and legend and has you taking the role of Odysseus, sauntering off into the sunset after having a good old sack of Troy. You beetle home across the foam to be united with your faithful wife Penelope in far-off Ithaca, only to discover that everyone else wants to be united with her as well, whereupon you must show your true colours and send the dogs running.

So, there's no shortage of plot here, my magical friends. What's more, on the way home you are confronted by all the usual Homeric horrors, from the lotus eaters (a bit of a yawn, really) to Scylla and Charybdis (monster and whirlpool respectively). The blurb on the packaging claims that there's 80K of text here, which sounds good and indeed the location descriptions are certainly longer and more detailed than previous Duckworth offerings. However, I wasn't able to finish the game in the time provided so I can't be absolutely certain whether the aforesaid 80K means 80K of compressed text (ie, a lot) or just 80K of ASCII code (not a lot, by todays standards). Knowing Pete Gerrard's programming techniques, I suspect that it may be ASCII — ah well . . .

On the subject of programming and game design, the news is both good and bad. First the good news - there's no doubt that this program is streets ahead Duckworth's other efforts. Although it's rather slow in operation, the text is convincing and the presentation on screen is neat and tidy. Unfortunately there are no graphics, but this doesn't matter as much as it might because of the strong story line.

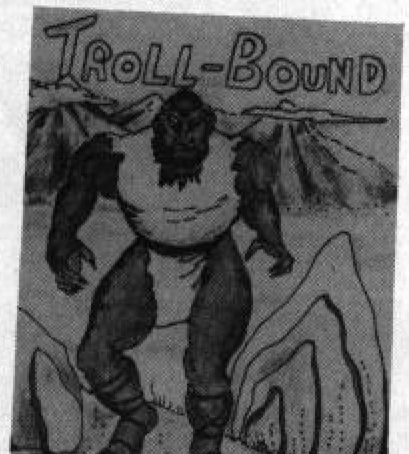
However, and here's the bad news, this adventure is still unacceptably old-fashioned in its basic structure. The market has grown out of verb/noun games that don't tell you which words they can't understand, and restrict a player to only, essentially, examining and using objects. What we need are more routines garnered from artificial intelligence (as in *Suspect*) and better coding to speed the whole thing up, combined with efficient text compression to give us not just twenty words, but two hundred for a location description (if it's a text-only game). Come on Gerrards! This subject could have been meat for a real humdinger of an adventure — Mike's got the penmanship, so tell Pete to sharpen up his programming practices a bit for next time.

Still, it's not a BAD game, this one. After I played *Mountain Palace Adventure* I really thought I'd never pick up a Duckworth game again, but *Odyssey* has persuaded me that there's life in Gloucester Crescent, NW1 after all. But £9.95 . . . Phew! Even if you do get two cassettes, I can't help but feel that I'd rather fork out an extra quid or two for a copy of *Zork I, II,* or *III* on disk from Commodore . . .

Atmosphere 85%
Interaction 55%
Lasting Interest 76%
Value for Money 59%
Overall 65%

TROLLBOUND

Questline



Trollbound?? I hear you mutter — surely we saw this one last month. Well, we did and we didn't. After reading Ol' Whitey's review, Tony Treadwell threw himself into the Goblin's Dungeon in despair, but then made good use of the time to upgrade the game and send me a copy. And I'm delighted to wave my wand in his direction and say that this new version of the game is a vast improvement.

It's not that the structure of the game has been much changed, but the presentation and the pictures. And it's on disk as well now for the extremely reasonable price of £5.95. This must make it the cheapest disk offering around, and I reckon it's now even better value than previously. What's more the disk version has some nice added features, including an optional fast loader and the ability to load the title screen and music separately, or not at all if you want to get down to the game quicker.

I shan't repeat the Troglodytic details of the plot, but Tony has added several new graphics that really are attractive . . . AND he's tidied up his spellynge. Look, I know the Wiz appears to have a bit of a bee in his bonnet about spelling and presentation in games, but really it is important. If I opened an Agatha Christie book and read 'The boddy laie on the sowfa beside the tayble' I would simply put it back on the shelf. The same goes for adventures which after all have an abundance of text as their only distinguishing mark . . . So it's nice to see it properly presented.

Thanks for the new version Tony, and I hope that others get the same enjoyment out of it as I did. Order your copy from Mr Treadwell at the address in the Helpline column.

NEWS . . . .NEWS . . . .

GAC Hits Commodore

You may have noticed Amstrad owners getting rather full of themselves recently. That's because they've currently got what must rank as the best adventure generator of them all available for their machine while the rest of us have to sit and fume until it's converted — and now it is!

Incentive have just announced that *GAC (Graphic Adventure Creator)* will be available for the 64 on the 1st May. Just in case you're wondering what all the fuss is about, just check out these items:-
text compression (up to 40%)
- multicolour graphics with patterned fills and other tasty features
- merge picture facility
- space for over 700 nouns, verbs, and adverbs
- full length word recognition
- complex sentence input
- ultra easy to use

And all that for under [illegible]5.00. Sounds good, and I can assure you it is. Let's just hope that the delivery date doesn't start slipping

Bored of the Rings

Commodore owners have good reason to be *Bored of Bored of the Rings*, since up till now it's only been available on other machines, although extensively written about and praised in the computer press. Now, however, you can get well and truly Bored, when the company releases the game on 1st April.

That should be a fitting day to put out a program that features Fordo, Spam, Pimply, and Murky on their journey to Mount Gloom via the River Anadin and the dangers of Berkwood. A Quilled gem that should be well worth the effort of prising off the shelves for £7.95.

Ultra Colossal Cave

Here it is, the game you've been waiting for. *The Very Big Cave Adventure* is about to be released by **St Brides**, who claim it to be THE original adventure on which all those Colossal clones were really based. The fact is, they say, the original game was so appallingly stupid that no-one dared release it, so now's your chance to check out the truth.

So, at long last, the unbelievable secret of the twisty little passages could soon be yours for £7.95. And if you think that's going for a song, wait until you come across the bird!


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AND THE
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with art by
RON WILSON AND
JOE SINNOTT
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Wizard Tips

Aha me hearties! Here's this month's precious hoard of magical mystery tips for those in need. Don't forget to keep your backnumbers of Ol' Whitey's column, so that finally you'll end up with a neat collection of hints on a wide range of adventures. Of course, you and I know that you never have to resort to - gasp - hint columns like this one, but you can never be sure, can you?

Lord of the Rings
Don't wear the ring for long periods, it saps your strength.
Don't tackle the barge without adequate food supplies.

Mindshadow
Meat cleavers make chain saws obsolete.
Be charitable to guttersnipes and take note of what they say.

Snowqueen
Make sure you pay lip-service to Granny before you go.

Borrowed Time
Head for the chair if you're in trouble.
Keep the glass and then let your pursuers down with a bump.

Causes of Chaos
Wood's in fashion - wear it and go down in the world.
Make sure you're properly dressed before you enter the tunnel.

Enchanter
Gondar the dragon and guncho Krill.

Never Ending Story
No glass, no blinks.
Don't go marshing around with Artax



CLEVER CONTACTS

Come all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant! This is the page where adventurers all over the world can get together and pass on the valuable experience they have gained on their travels. If you've finished a game (or games — clever clogs) and want to go down in history as one of the Chosen Few, then let me know! Write to the **White Wizard's Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**. All details on a postcard please. If you're writing requesting help, then please be aware that I may not always be able to find room for your request on these pages. The best course of action by far is to get in touch with one the adventurers listed below offering help on the game you're stuck on. The White Wizard may be immortal, ingenious, and big-headed, but he's only human and can't answer every letter he receives. If you have a modem, you can contact me on Prestel. My mailbox number is **919994854**. Telecom Gold subscribers can reach me on **83:JNL251**.

Club Help Offered

The Questline Adventure Club is still running strong in Oxford. **Tony Treadwell** — the first man ever to be nominated a demi-Wizard by Ol' Whitey (back in the days of the first ZZAP! issues) — will endeavour to help on all matters magical, vegetable, and mineral. Questline also appears on **Compunet** and **Micronet**, so you can catch them there if you have a modem. For free membership and a newsletter (very informative and packed with tips) send an SAE to: **Questline, 17 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. Tel (0865) 68637.**

Adventureline, run by **Roger Garret**, is still alive and kicking, despite rumours to the contrary. However, Roger is no longer contactable on the 'phone, so letters only please to **Adventureline, 52 Micawber Way, Chelmsford, Essex, Tel (0245) 442098**. Please note that membership (plus newsletter) costs £1.00.

If there are any other clubs out there in the big, wide world and you wish to enrol the White Wizard's readers through these pages then write in with full details and samples of any newsletters, membership cards, badges, gold bars, etc. to me. Readers will, however, appreciate that I am unwilling to publicise clubs unless I have good evidence that my beloved readers are going to get good value from them, and aren't wasting their stamps and hard-earned guilders in sending off for membership.

Help Offered

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Catacombs, Eureka, Hulk, Spiderman, Munroe Manor, Hobbit, Forest of Doom, Pyramid of Doom, Quest for Merravid, Holy Grail, Twin Kingdom Valley, Dungeon Adventure, Castle of Terror, Golden Baton, Perseus and Andromeda, Witches Cauldron, Classic Adventure, Arrow of Death Part 1, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Aztec Tomb Part 1, Gremlins, Jewels of Babylon
Simon Gaunt, Tel. 0302 726917 between 5pm and 9.30pm only.

Valhalla, Waxworks, Golden Baton, Hulk, Spiderman, Snowball, Arrow of Death Parts 1 and 2, Hobbit, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy, Terrormolinos, Hampstead, Eureka
Nick Wright, 1 Eastleigh Drive, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 5HZ.

Urban Upstart, The Helm, Subsunk, Circus, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Arrow of Death Part 1, Hulk, Spiderman, Adventureland, Secret Mission, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Gremlins, Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure
Gavin Berry, 25 Beauvale Road, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 6PF Tel (0602) 635117 between 2pm and 5pm only.

Red Moon, Lords of Time, Adventure Quest, Fourth Protocol, Lords of Midnight, Hobbit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Gremlins, Hampstead, Tower of Despair, Empire of Karn, Spiderman
Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT Tel 01 788 7511 not later than 9.00pm.

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Gremlins, Hobbit, Terrormolinos
Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel 0592 201384.

Hacker, Dragonsworld, Hampstead, Empire of Karn, Heroes of Karn
Lynn Leech, Tel 0942 606900 after 6pm and Sundays.

Heroes of Karn, Voodoo Castle, Ten Little Indians, The Lost City, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, The Hobbit
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, County Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Zork 1,2,3, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy
Nigel Morse, 11 Green Leafe Avenue, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5RG Tel. Doncaster 61672 between 6pm and 8pm, weekdays only.

Eureka
Andrew Froggatt, 195 White Swan Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland 4, New Zealand.

Gremlins, Fourth Protocol, Hobbit, Empire of Karn, Snowball, Lords of Time, Red Moon, Twin Kingdom Valley, Tower of Despair, Mindshadow, Tracer Sanction, Spiderman, Adventure Quest, Lords of Midnight
Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT. Tel: 01 788 7511 before 10.00pm.

The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, The Time Machine, Return to Eden
Clyde Meli, Villa Yvonne, 36 Ta'Xbiex Terrace, Ta'Xbiex, Malta

The Hobbit, Tower of Despair, Eureka, Perseus and Andromeda, Colossal Cave, Wizard of Akyrz, Munroe Manor, Fourth Protocol Part I
Geoff Wing, 171 Beadlemead, Netherfield, Milton Keynes, MK6 4HV Tel: 0908 661287

Hobbit, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Gremlins, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story
Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel: 0592 201384

PLEASE NOTE: Respect your fellow adventurers. Never phone after 10.00pm (earlier if specifically mentioned above) and **ALWAYS** enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want a reply by post.

Contacting the White Wizard

You can contact the White Wizard c/o ZZAP! 64, or — if you have one of these new fangled modem things — on Prestel MBX 919994854 or BT Gold 83:JNL251.

the Wiz should point out that he doesn't log onto Prestel as often as he used to for fear of incurring huge phone bills. However, BT Gold is still monitored regularly every day.

I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who've been in touch over the last month, and to bring you some snippets from Micronet and the Wizards-On-Line Society, viz: **David Stevens, 027958011**, who is designing a game with his freinds called *Riders of the Apocalypse*. Sounds hairy, David, and I hope we see it on the 64 ASAP!

Jonathan Wolff, 044253542, who wants us to start a regular MUD section. What do other wizards think? Should we devote more space to on-line adventuring? Now that Level 9 are setting up their own on-line game, it seems that this branch of the art may be developing faster than I had hoped. Let me know your views.

Julian Hensey, 219992780, who is having trouble in *Ultima III* — but which I suspect he's overcome by now.

John Macvie, 029277141, who doesn't believe I'm the White Wizard. The Balrogs are on their way, John, — duck!!

Please note that the White Wizard cannot answer individual enquiries from lost adventurers. If you're really stuck, then try asking one of the Clever Contacts for assistance.



WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS:

This month we have three competitions results for you — the Novagen *Mercenary* competition has proved quite hard for many people, so we are holding it over for another month, just to give you all a chance — so get on with it! Of the other three, two have stunning visual winning entries, and — lucky winners — there's plenty of room to do them justice. So, on with the results.



John Palmer's winning max Headroom entry, beautifully drawn and executed!

M-M-MAX HEADROOM COMP

A 14" portable GEC Colour Television is the top prize offered by Quicksilva for the person most capable of describing what the rest of Max Headroom looks like apart from his famous head that is). For six followers-up, there are Max Headroom goodie bags containing a copy of the game, a T-shirt, a video of the film '20 Minutes Into The Future' and a copy of the book, 'Max Headroom's Guide to Life'.

We received loads of entries, some very imaginative, some funny and some unprintable! But the decision went with the illustrated entry which to some extent has hedged its bets a bit,

WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS:

but it is funny, and exceptionally well drawn — so congratulations and a portable colour telly to **John Palmer, of Tiverton, Devon EX16 6DP**. The Quicksila goodie bags go to:

Andrew Scothern, Nr Mexborough, S Yorks; Ivan Cross, Hants RG25 1AE; Andrew Dickenson, Hull HU10 7AG; Wayne Grundy, W Yorks LS8 5HS; Martin Haynes, Cornwall EX23 ONA; Mobarak Ahmed, Milton Keynes MK2 3PT.

ROBIN O' THE WOOD

Odin Computer Graphics were interested in seeing whether you could spot the difference between two pictures of woodland violence and win a copy of their game in the process. 25 were up for grabs and the ZZAP! readers with luck on their side are:

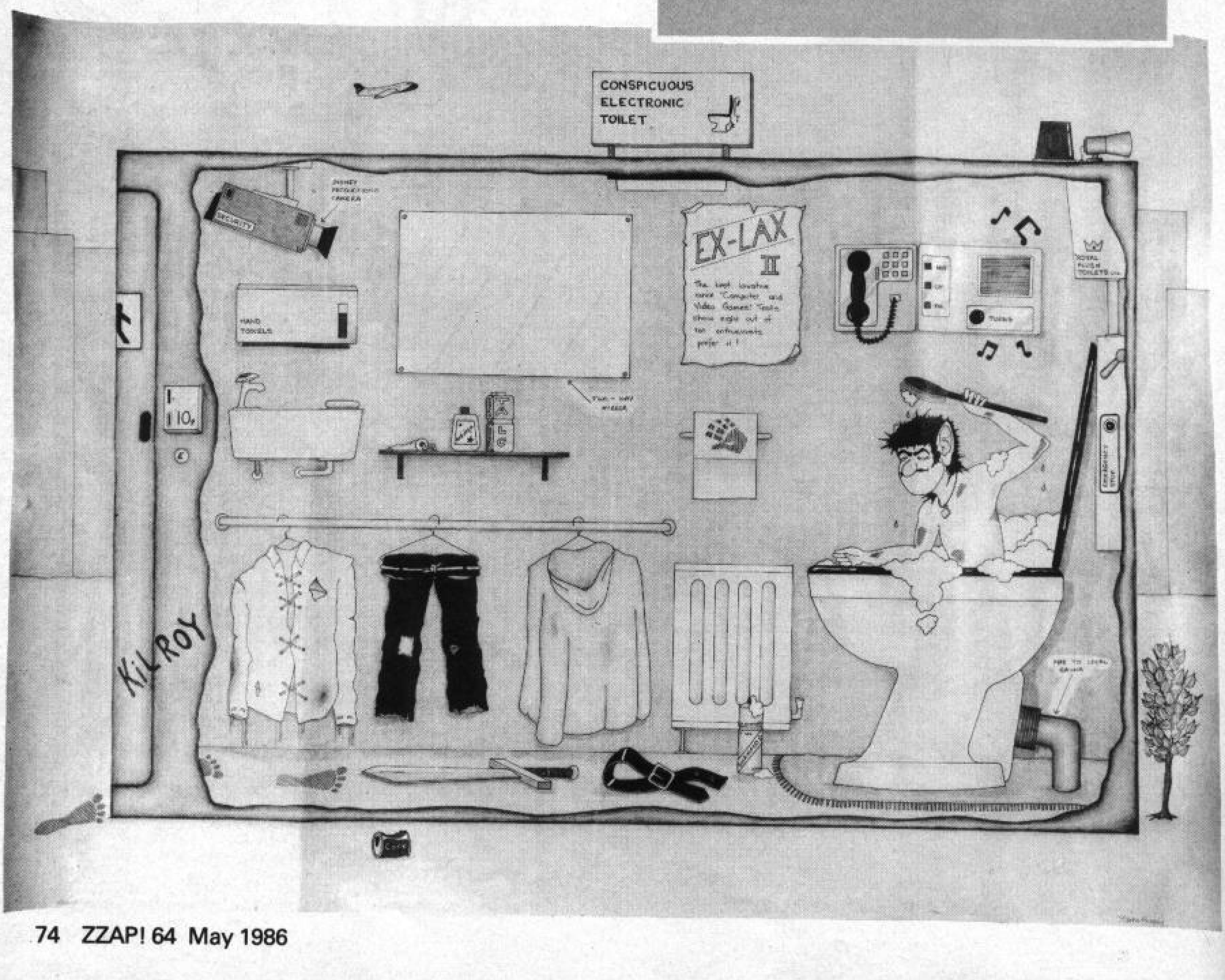
Nigel Parsons, Cleveland TS24 8QJ; Simon Steele, Rochdale OL11 5XB; Ian Jones, Clwyd LL14 2SE; John Tomlinson, N Humberside DN14 6JX; Peter Hartley, Lancs BB6 7JF; Malcolm Eve, Norfolk NR19 2DD; Kevin Davis, Gwent NP5 3AX; DP Tidswell, Doncaster DN8 4LP; Stuart Kennedy, Lancs O612 7HX; Paul Knight, Herefordshire HR3 6HG; Joshua Bates, Middlesex TW12 1NH; Steve Shepherd, London E12 6UF; Neil Frazer, Tyne & Wear SR3 3LF; Owen Lewis, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE2 3LA; Bo Unold, Albertslund, Denmark; Kenneth Arnold, Coventry CV3 6DP; Janne Jarcis, Cambridge CB5 8HT; David Pollitt, Merseyside WA12 9QY; Rupert Stathaun, Bucks HP22 6LS; Douglas Leitch, Scotland KW12 6XN; Irfan Jamadar, London NW10 1AU; Michael Downer, Essex SS7 1ED; Mrs Myra Brown, Fife KY7 7HB; Ron Wright, Derby DE7 1TG; Chris Dickson, Surrey KT19 8SW.

HO HO HOLOGRAM — MELBOURNE HOUSE

The winner of this comp for *Lord of the Rings* receives a hologram, whereas the lucky runners-up get a copy of the game. What you had to do was provide us with an image of the 20th Century Hobbit. So who's the hologram owner? **Steven Harold, from Salford, Lancs M7 OAP** is the man, for his wonderful artistry, sense of fun and imagination. The 30 runners-up are:

Christian Williams, Essex CO16 OHU; A Dina, Middlesex UB5 4SE; Barry Pringle, Middlesex UB6 8DG; Barry Harvey, Kent BR8 7TU; Stephen Oldroyd, W Yorks WF1 3DN; Jason Hall, Essex IG8 OTL; David Lawrence, Surrey CR3 1DN; Craig A Robertson, Cheshire SK9 1NH; N Coley, Birmingham 30 1EE; John Farmer, Sheffield S18 5WJ; Mrs T Goodwin, Camberley GU17 7UX; Marc Wild, Mansfield, Nottingham; Symond Whittle, Nottingham NG5 2AG; Lee Price, Nuneaton, Warwickshire; Steven Holland, Northumberland TD15 2YQ; D Honan, Huddersfield HD5 8UR; , Christopher Waite, Essex CM3 3ED; J Bruce, Cleveland TS25 2NB; Ash Garrard, Essex S59 2BJ; SK Clover, Surrey GU15 4TW; Richard Judd, Hants RG27 8EU; L Wilmot, Tyne & Wear NE38 ODB; Tom Hargreaves, Staffs WV7 3AL; S Humphreys, Liverpool L28 4EW; Lewis Sparrowhawk, Kent BR5 2RX; Phil Allison, Cleveland TS23 2RF; , Steven Miller, Lancs OL6 8BX; Neville Brown, Surrey CR3 1DN; Lional Dorval, Essex IG2 7PL; James Betts, Nr Northwich, Cheshire; Tom Barker, Glasgow G61 2AU.

Steven Harold's 20th Century Hobbit at home. Steven's accompanying note points out that a Hobbit would certainly want a bath after his time transportation, and what better place than one of those ultra modern automatic loos popping up everywhere? After all, would a Hobbit know the difference between a toilet and a bath? Good question.



THERE IS A TIDE . . .

There should be something for everyone in this month's piece (huh, as if there isn't usually). Simulation stimulation is provided with a look at Sid Meier's *Silent Service*, which puts you in command of a WWII sub. For the traditionalists, we finally have *Tigers in the Snow* by SSI and *Iwo Jima* by PSS. I also get my come-uppance for not having appreciated some of the finer details of Datasoft's *Alternate Reality* in an interview with Sam Poole, president of Datasoft.

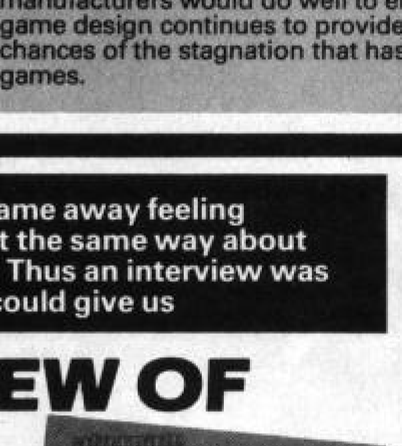
It's strange to think that as disk drives are becoming more popular and in-depth strategy games continue to gain acceptance in markets on both sides of the Atlantic, wargaming shows signs of losing out to the popularity of role playing games, just as it did in the conventional market some years ago. Personally, I don't think the rift will be as great is it was the last time it happened. The conventional market had more complications. Board games were not often very good and traditional miniatures were rising in price dramatically. By comparison, role playing was relatively cheap. A handful of miniatures sufficed for most games as opposed to an entire army. Rules were cheaply produced and role playing was more of a social hobby, there being five or six players to the average game rather than a two player wargame.

It's hard to tell where the balance will lie in the computer hobby. Popularity of both areas will probably ebb and flow for a while. Both types of game tend to be designed for solo play and both are as cheap (or expensive, depending on your point of view) to produce. Crossover between the different types of game is also breaking down any definable differences. *Silent Service* for instance, could be classed as a simulation, or a wargame, or a role player. In these respects, the strategy gaming market is in a flexible state at the moment. Considering the growth of importance in this market, manufacturers would do well to ensure an open minded attitude to game design continues to provide varied products and reduces the chances of the stagnation that has marred other types of computer games.

When our Sean Masterson reviewed *Alternate Reality* he came away feeling unhappy about the game. Datasoft read the review and felt the same way about Sean — after all, it has been a smash hit over in the States. Thus an interview was arranged so that the people on the other side of the pond could give us

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF

alternate REALITY®



. . . AND MORE

SEAN MASTERSON takes the transatlantic phone line to talk to SAM POOLE, President of DATASOFT, and KATHI TREMBLAY, Datasoft's Marketing Projects Manager.

First off I spoke to Sam Poole, and asked him to update me a bit on *Alternate Reality — The City*, the first product in the series.

'*Alternate Reality* will actually be comprised of seven different adventures, the first of which is *The City*, a role playing fantasy adventure. Part two, *The Dungeon* will follow in the second part of this year. Then there'll be *The Arena*, then *The Palace* so there'll be a number of different adventures all being role playing fantasies.

'You'll be able to take the character you developed in *The City* and hopefully use it in the rest of the adventures where you will eventually make your way back to Earth and seek revenge on those people who abducted you. It's a different kind of role playing fantasy to *D&D*. *AR* really goes a step further in a kind of moralistic way. It encourages you to play the game as a very good individual. When you make decisions, they have an impact on how you play the game so that, if you're faced with individual characters you meet in the streets, you'll often have the choice of whether you want to try to avoid them, greet them or attack them and those kinds of decisions and how you react to them have an impact on the rest of the game. It's a very, very *evolved* game.'

As the game has been out for some time over in the States, I asked Sam, how it had been received so far.

'It's had an excellent response from the major distributors and retail outlets. It's one of the top products in the states. After one month of sales, it appeared in the top ten of Billboard's Software Chart (the major chart in the US). The consumer response has been even greater. We've had literally thousands of letters congratulating us from people who have tremendously enjoyed the game and in fact because of the response we've had, we're going to form the *AR* User Group. We are inviting people to send in comments and tips they have after playing the game, the kinds of responses they've had with different characters, what kinds of actions they've taken to enhance their characters.

'It will be open to players in the UK as well. We are going to distribute our product through US Gold, and they are in the process now of forming an *AR* club. We'll offer special advantages to people that join the club. We'll send them material including a map — not a detailed outline of the city, but an honest rendering so that people who join the club will be able to examine it and see where the various shops and taverns are and where things like *The Palace* and *The Arena* are generally located within the city. It doesn't tell them how to get into them but it does provide a general feel for it.'

'It's one of the top products in the states. After one month of sales, it appeared in the top ten of Billboard's Software Chart.'

I asked about how something this complex actually came about and the answer must mean that this is one of the contenders for Longest Time Spent In Development.

'It was started about three and a half years ago by Paradise Programming, based in Hawaii. The people there originally started working on the Atari and the game was only intended for release on the Atari, so a lot of the features gave us a difficult time to translate onto the Commodore. We acquired the rights to finish, manufacture and release the game. But it took us an extra year and a half to actually translate the literally hundreds of thousands of lines of code into the other versions of *AR*. The individual responsible for the original game is Phil Price. And he is designing *The Dungeon*.'

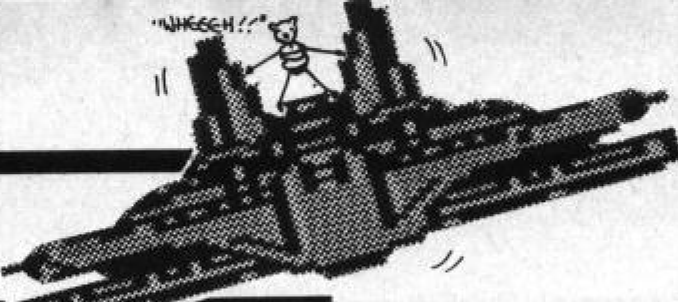
I asked about Phil Price and whether he was a role player or a programmer, first and foremost. 'No, he is a programmer but he has a great deal of knowledge and depth of understanding about that whole Fantasy Role Playing backdrop.'

'Actually, in *The Dungeon* itself we have developed the spec-

"THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE TO ME!"



STRATEGY



ific objectives. It will be an underground scenario below the city and you will have to go through four different levels and hopefully, when you get to the end of the fourth level, you will be able to take actions to allow you to go on to the next scenario, *The Arena*.

'You will be able to play each as a stand alone game but it will be best to develop a character in the first part of the game and take him onto further adventures. However, you would be able to start a character in say, *The Dungeon* and take him back to the city and go on from there. In that respect the game is open ended.'

With *Alternate Reality* being such a massive project, taking such a long time to develop, did this mean future games would be based on the *AR* system?

'*Bruce Lee — Enter the Dragon* will be a full role playing adventure and have strong hi-res graphics and animation sequences.'

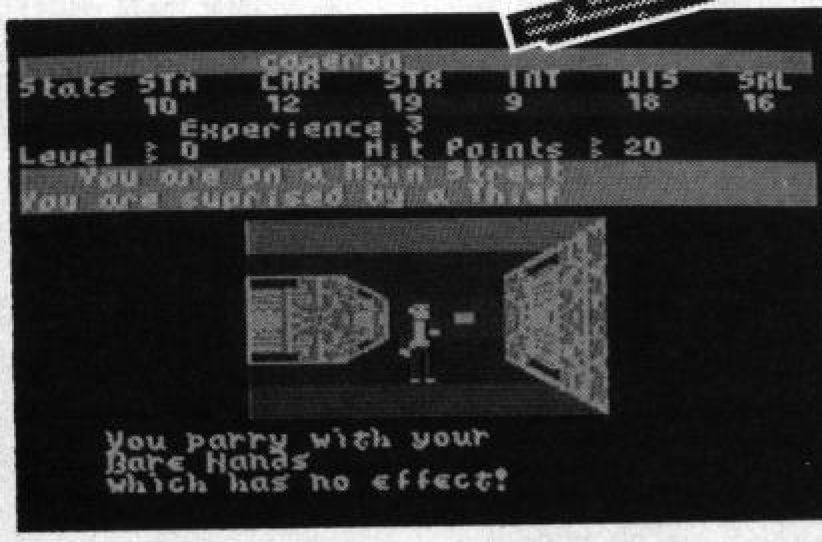
'Obviously as we're designing and developing the series, we've learned a great deal about random character generation, and logic and statistics. As a result, we are now looking to use some of those same types of features in a follow up program based on *Bruce Lee*, which has been a major seller in Europe. Called *Bruce Lee — Enter the Dragon*, it will be a full role-playing adventure and have strong hi-res graphics and animation sequences but taking advantage of some of the techniques we've developed in *AR*. Combining the best of both.'

So how would these future games be packaged? Did Datasoft intend for all of them to be two disk game packs?

'Well one of the things I noticed about your review is because of the tremendous amount of programming involved, certainly the most we've seen, probably in the UK as well, there's this necessity for a lot of disk swapping. The programmers are working at changing some of the techniques so that hopefully we'll be able to cut down on some of the disk swapping that's necessary now.'

Leaving that rather cryptically answered point aside, I took the opportunity of asking about the attitudes of the American gamers, who are more used to such 'Mega-games'.

'Yeah, we've had, er people who have commented here in the US about the disk swapping as well, but the vast majority of them, I would say 95%, have made the point that the extent



and depth to which they can build their characters and the kinds of experiences they can have outweigh the disadvantages of the disk swapping.'

Fair enough. What other machines were being considered for new versions of the game and how would Datasoft take advantage of the new range of sixteen bit computers like the Amiga and the ST?

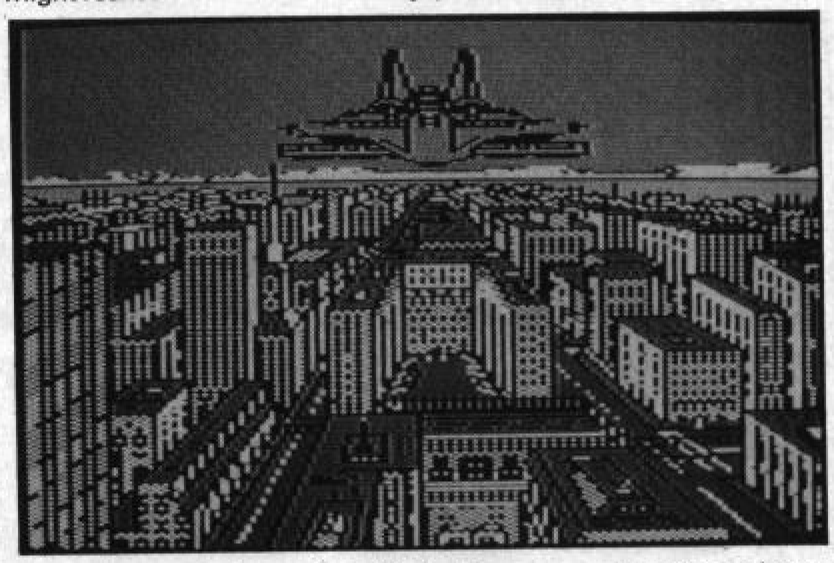
'We have developed it for the Atari, Commodore and the Apple. We are actually enhancing *The City* on the IBM, the Macintosh, the ST and Amiga. Not only because of the graphics and the sound capabilities of these machines but also because of the additional memory, we are going to be able to have a lot of other features that we couldn't put into *The City*.'

'Because it is an entertainment product, we're finding more and more that you have to appeal to all of the senses of an individual.'

If *AR* is a mega-game, it certainly takes a mega approach. The opening even has series of credits done in the style of a major feature film. Did Mr Poole see this as a sign of the future of game presentation?

'Because it is an entertainment product, we're finding more and more that you have to appeal to all of the senses of an individual and that encompasses graphics, the use of keyboard and joystick and so on. You have the opportunity to do music, so you're appealing to a lot of different senses. And one of the things which we actually borrowed from movies was the credit lines to get the people more involved in the atmosphere of the product itself.

'And there are a lot of clues just from that scenario. Now, you don't know what to look for, but as you go through the later scenarios, you will see that there are a lot more clues in the opening sequence than you might realise.'



To tell me more about what *AR* actually contained, Kathi Tremblay came on the line to dispense wisdom and knowledge of encyclopaedic depth. But what exactly did her job entail?

'We do a lot of playtesting and I supervise testing and I write the instructions for the game and review submissions that people send in.'

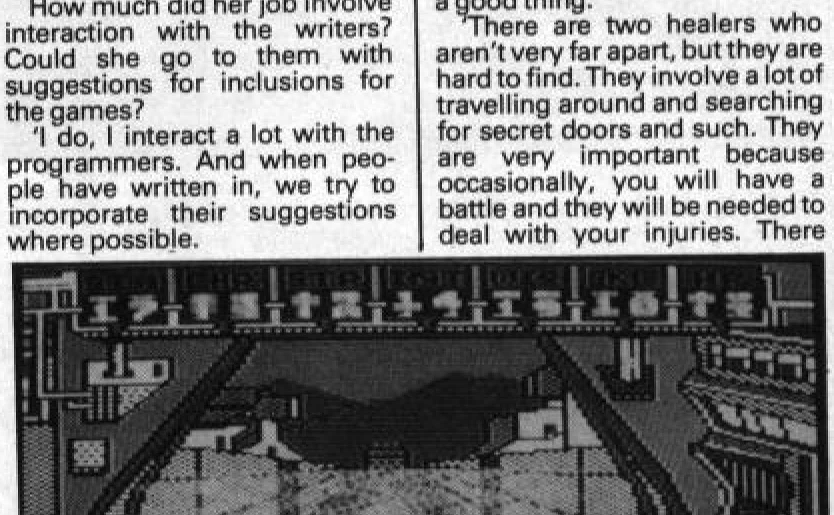
How much did her job involve interaction with the writers? Could she go to them with suggestions for inclusions for the games?

'I do, I interact a lot with the programmers. And when people have written in, we try to incorporate their suggestions where possible.

'Anyway, there are fifteen shops, scattered all over the city and there are seven inns which are really very crucial to find because after a time, you need to know where they all are. If you don't have any food or water packets, going into the taverns can save you. If you have lost all your money and you go into a tavern and sit around for a while, you'll be taken care of Also, if, when you go into the taverns, you buy a round for the house, that's a very good thing because it makes everybody very friendly towards you. It helps develop the character in the game. On the other hand, if you drink too much, you get drunk and this can have an effect on the character in the game. So if you think about it, you can do too much of a good thing.

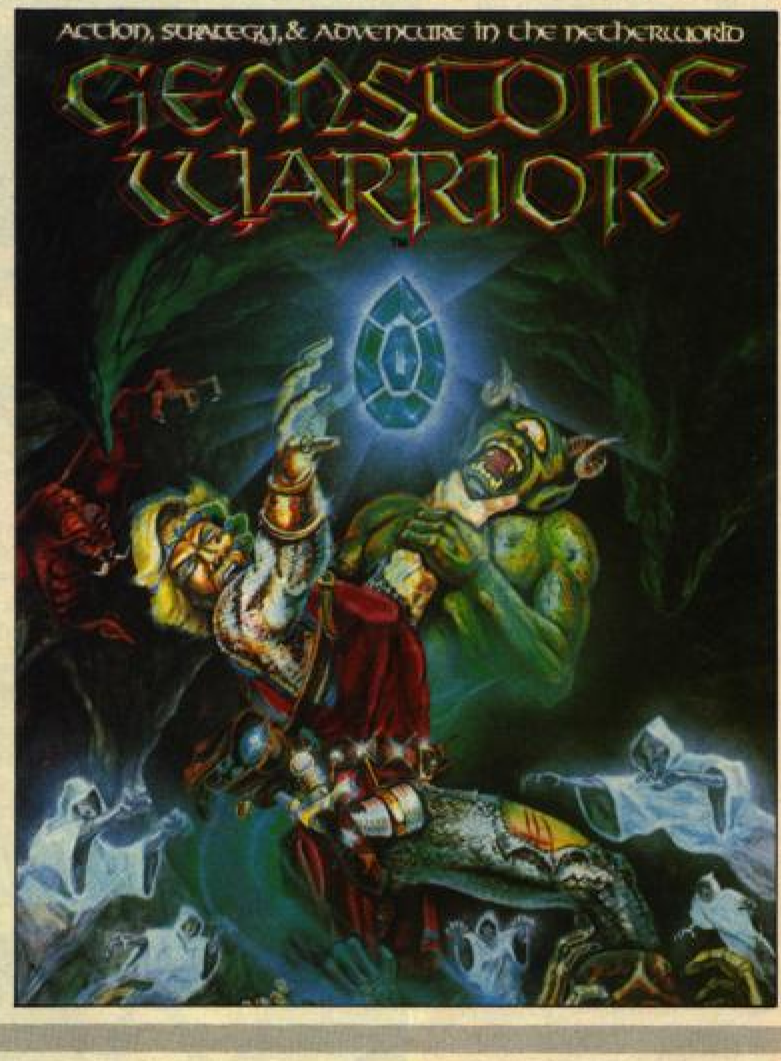
'If, when you go into the taverns, you buy a round for the house, it makes everybody very friendly towards you.'

'There are two healers who aren't very far apart, but they are hard to find. They involve a lot of travelling around and searching for secret doors and such. They are very important because occasionally, you will have a battle and they will be needed to deal with your injuries. There



64 ATARI

Go Back to when Time Stood Still.



GEMSTONE WARRIOR

Put on the mantle of the brave warrior and descend into the Caverns of Horror! Your singular task is to rescue the Gemstone from the loathsome creatures of the Netherworld. You will call on every ounce of courage and stamina as you fight your way through the treacherous labyrinths!

Gemstone Warrior is more than an exciting arcade game. It features real-time action Hi-Res colour graphics and strategy. The Gemstone Warrior is a thinking being. Crossbows, fireballs and magic are only part of his arsenal. He carries one more weapon which sets him apart: WISDOM. You must provide his wisdom, we will provide the rest.

QUESTRON

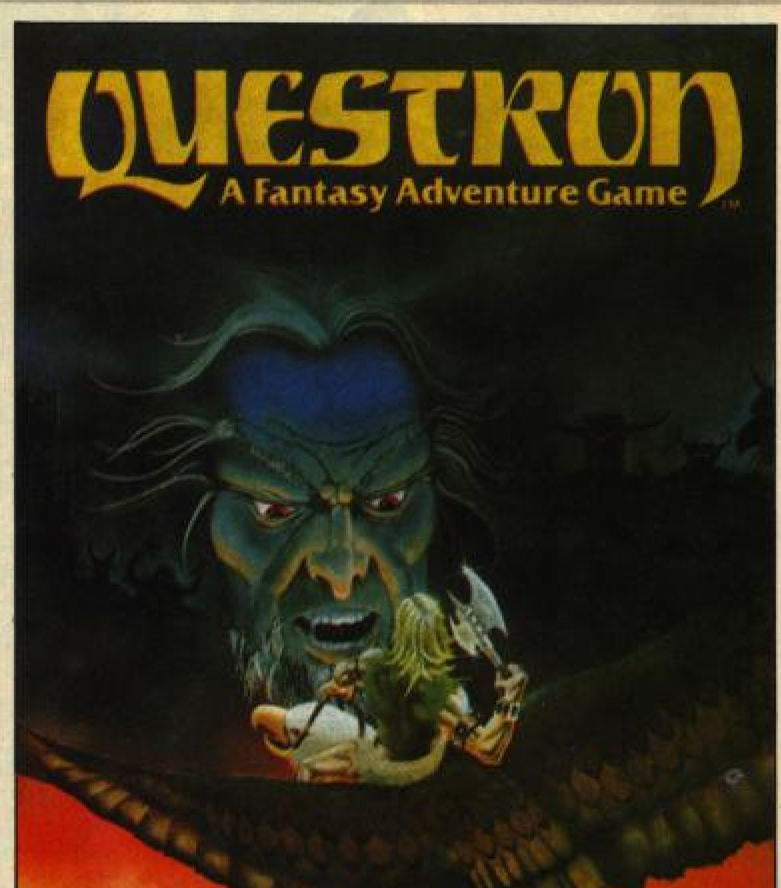
These are dire times for the Questron Empire. Mantor, a renegade sorcerer, has possession of the Great Book of Evil Magic and is using the despotic power it bestows upon him to plague the land with hideous monsters. The Kings once proud army has been decimated by these deadly foes; and thus he has put his trust in you, a humble serf, to use your cunning and strength to steal the Magic Book and render Mantor powerless.

You will travel across many lands; find treasures along the way; but beware the deadly creatures that await you on your journey...

PHANTASIE

When sorcery ruled, and trolls and minotaurs still walked this Earth, a party of six intrepid adventurers set out to find the Nine Rings and use them to destroy the Dark Lord. This is your quest; your Phantasie. A multiple character role-playing game, Phantasie transports you to the medieval Isle of Gelnor for the adventure of your dreams. You'll map out new terrain, explore maze-like dungeons, solve puzzles, learn spells, gain experience and battle countless monsters. Beauiful Hi-Res colour graphics and a spell binding storyline will suspend reality and launch you into a magical new world.





SSI

U.S. GOLD All American Software





are twelve guilds and of course they can provide magic or cursed weapons. There are four smithies (where you can purchase various items and haggle), various shops which have everything at a fixed price and then there are ten other areas which, for the most part are areas used interactively.'

Was Kathi selected for the job because she was a role player?

'Er no I am not. I had never played anything — any role playing game before I began testing *AR*. I've since become hooked.'

So what did hooked mean in terms of time spent playtesting?

'A lot. Generally hours and hours each day. The game took several weeks to playtest. And weeks can stretch out into months. I playtest other games as well; *Zorro* for instance. In fact, almost all the games we've released so far. We have four people who are working on playtesting as well.

'We feel it's important to get as much testing on the games as we can and get other people's point of view. The more people we have working on them, the more chance we have of catching errors before the game is released. Well, in any game there's always something you would have liked to have done better so, we've looked at all the versions for the different machines so far, and I think we have caught everything. Quality control is very important to us.'

When Sam Poole came back on the line, I asked him about a couple of rumoured Datasoft releases; *Pole Position II* and *Elevator Action*.

'*Pole Position II*: we're in discussion at the moment with Namco to release this game. It's 45-50% complete and if all goes well in our discussions with Namco, it will be released in the second half of this year. But we're still in negotiations and we have to conclude those first. As far as *Elevator Action*, the licensor, Tito — we originally had the licence but they pulled that back, so it will probably never be released.

'We're now working with Ocean software, where we have developed several new arcade style products.'

How did this, and the state of the markets in the US and UK affect Datasoft's attitude to doing arcade games?

'One of the things that has happened over the past year, and is progressing at a very fast pace, is the markets are coming very close to each other. We're now working with Ocean software, where we have developed several new arcade style products based on games by Konami. The first of these is *Yie Ar Kung Fu* and the second, of course, is *Hypersports* and we're working on a third called *Russian Attack* We've developed a working relationship with Ocean where we will secure the source code for these products and we release them in the United States. We have similar relationships with a number of companies in Australia, the UK and Canada, so we're seeing a lot of product going back and forth across the Atlantic and that's one of the things we're going to see more of.

'We're also talking with a number of other British companies about products they have developed in the UK for marketing and distribution here in the States because we have a very solid marketing and distribution organisation and I know a number of British companies that have attempted to release products over here, but I think that most people would probably agree that a company already established over here would do better in these terms. In fact one of the products we have a tentative agreement to release over here is Novagen's *Mercenary*.

'We already have a strong arrangement with Namco for three of their new arcade pro ducts and we'll be developing those as well. So we're not at all moving away from the arcade style products but we are expanding in different kinds of products in the entertainment fields. Not only arcades but RPGs, graphic/text adventures — we have what I would call a new style product, family entertainment, where instead of just having one or two persons play, have the whole family.

'Probably in the second part of this year we will have *221b Baker St*, based on Sherlock Holmes (taken from the board game of the same name by Gibsons). It's a great game and we have made the software version better than the board game. You will actually have an animated character walking through the streets of London and you will be able to go into pubs or theatres and pick up clues. But we will actually involve the animations with the clues and in the text, and up to four people can play the game. You know, it will be a very different type of product to be introduced in the US or anywhere else. We will have a follow up in the form of an additional data disk and there will be new locations, new clues and cases (in the first game there are thirty), new graphics and thirty more cases. So when people play it, if they get bored of the same graphics and locations or if they have played all of the scenarios, the disk will allow them to extend the original game.

'We are also working on crossword and Scrabble based games, strategy as well. We will try to take advantage of the board games to obtain a very new style of play. As a matter of fact, the follow up to *221b Baker St*, which is being put out by the same company, has already created interest because the company have seen some of the original screens and schematics and they want us to develop the follow up game on the computer as well. So we're looking at new products around the boardgame scenario. And this allows not only adults but children to play, which is an interesting concept because I think most games are aimed at a specific age group and we want the whole family to be involved, even if there are adult and children's versions. We want everybody to become interested.'

With time getting short and the threat of a dry throat developing, I asked Mr Poole if there was anything he would like to say to conclude the interview.

'I think that we can perhaps comment on, regarding *AR*, is that one of the drawbacks is the constant disk swapping caused by the massive amount of code in the program. The complexity, say in interaction between the seventy odd characters and so on . . . all of these things are taken into consideration and the mathematical intricacies cause these problems. But, I think that once people start to play it and begin to develop their characters, it won't be as significant a factor. In the US that's exactly what has happened. People are so enthralled that they are prepared to put up with this.

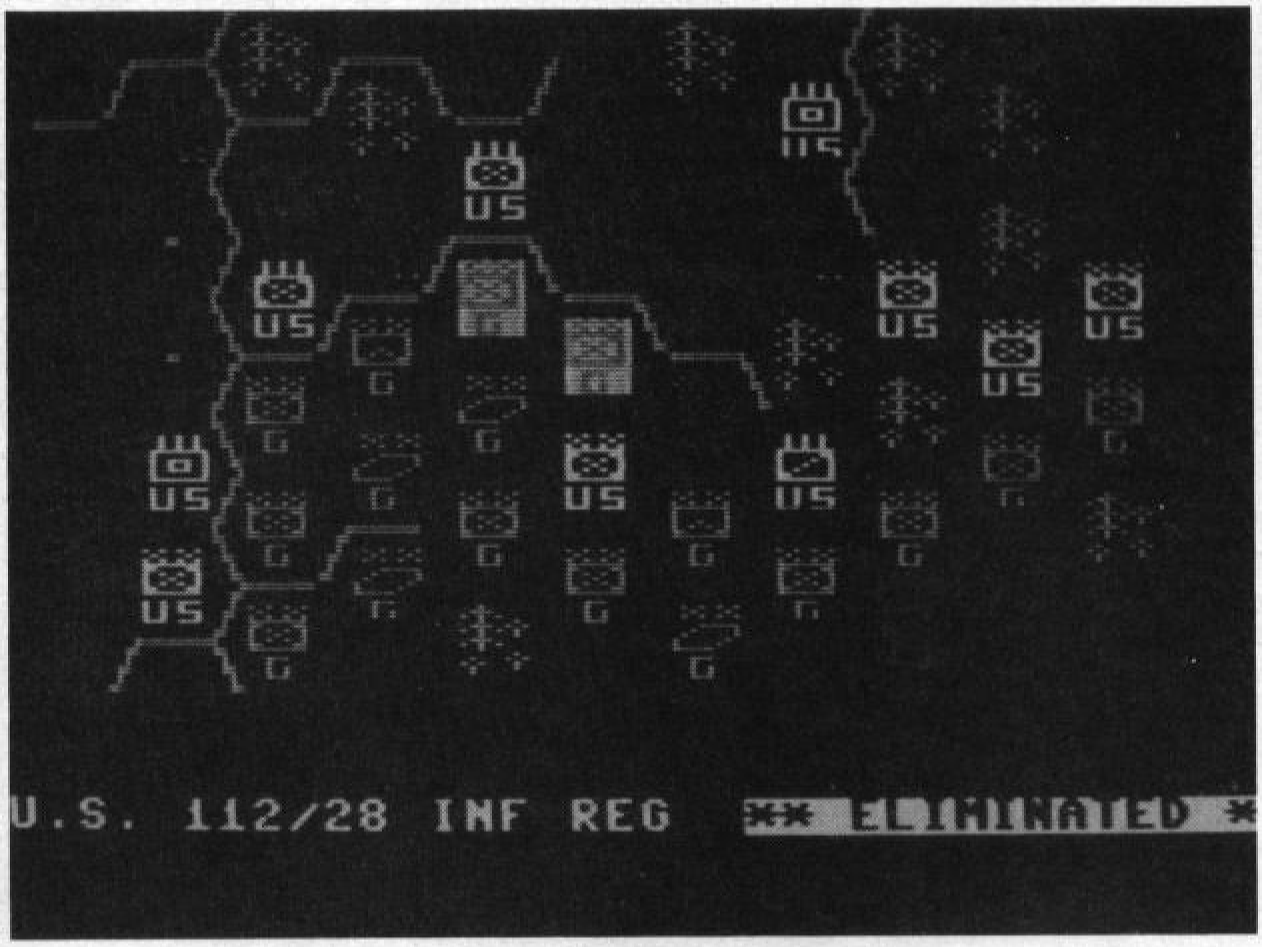
With that, we agreed to call it a day. I expressed my hope that Mr Poole would feel any possible imbalance created by my review would have now been redressed. He must have thought so because he promised that the future bi-monthly newsletters would be sent along with news of any further developments in the saga of the *Alternate Reality* series. Now, could it be that he had begun to convert me as well? I would have to consider my answer and its consequences over a long, cool pint down at The Bull.

I would like to thank **Mike Dixon** of Datasoft UK and **Tim Chaney** of US Gold for helping to arrange this interview.

Sean Masterson

TIGERS IN THE SNOW

US Gold/Transatlantic Simulations (SSI), £14.95 disk, £9.95 cass, keyboard only



At the close of 1944 the remnants of Germany's armed forces launched one of the most daring counter offensives of the war. The fighting had slackened in the approach to Christmas. Germany had formed new divisions equipped with tanks like the Hunting Tiger, that could stop the shells of all but the most powerful allied weapons. Finally, they launched their attack in the one place the allies thought impossible — the Ardennes. Because of the dense forests, nobody suspected a massive tank attack would be possible. As a result, the US had positioned weak, combat weary units there. The result was a major breach of the allied frontlines which could have been catastrophic if it had not been for the fact that the enemy could not keep their troops adequately supplied. This factor, coupled with the outstanding resistance of 7th Armoured Division in St Vith (who's commander sent the message'nuts' when asked to surrender whilst totally outgunned and outmanned) helped create the delaying action necessary for the allied forces.

In other words, one great subject for a wargame . . .

Actually, this is rather old stock as far as SSI are concerned, but it is also one of the first to be repackaged in the Transatlantic Simulation guise, intended as the format for all future licensed SSI releases. A slim, gatefold disk package means that SSI's traditionally chunky instruction books have had to be reduced to a glossy colour, fold out insert — not the easiest of items to refer to whilst playing, especially as there is no reference card. Still, the instructions are legible and a map of the play area is back printed onto them.

As is the norm with even these relatively early SSI games, the player is offered a wealth of options for play. Either the German or Allied side may be chosen, a two player option exists and the computer may be asked to play against itself. Levels of difficulty for each side may also be selected before the game commences. These reflect how many combat points are added to or subtracted from the historically accurate combat values of each side's units. Two versions of the game may be played. One is the Bastogne — St Vith scenario covering the period up to the sixteenth of December and the other is the campaign scenario which runs until the 27th. Victory is based on a victory point system which varies depending on the game selected.

If you select the Allied forces, the game begins in the middle of a turn with the German units heading directly to combat. It is in their interests to reach the Western map edge as soon as possible in order to gain the most victory points. To help both sides make the moves they feel most in their interests, a possible four attack and four defense strategies may be made for each unit. Basically, these determine the level of ferocity at which the units will enter combat. The harder these strategies are put to use, the more likely their will be a computer controlled modification to the original orders.

The thorough rules system accommodates such details as weather (variable but reasonably historically accurate), air support, artillery fire (handled on a points basis), advance after combat and zones of control. Logistics play an important part (especially where the Germans are concerned) as does the effect of the terrain. Anybody looking for detail and authenticity will find plenty of it in this game. One of the main complications in play is the result of not having joystick control. Because of the hex system employed, units follow a numerically input direction order and various long drawn out key pressing routines. Ah well, all this was written in the time when people thought all you could do to a window was double glaze it.

Worse than this however is the confusing rules leaflet. Sections of rules are repeated for no apparent reason. Terrain is explained but unit identification markers are not — in which case why have them? Other than victory point totals, little is explained in the way of victory in the different scenarios and sloppiness and ambiguities in basic instructions make the handling of units quite difficult for those will litle previous experience of such games. In fact the general tardinesss of the physical presentation is a great let down.

During play itself, things get better. The map is fairly easy to follow and you soon know which units can do what. Play can become quite fast once familiarity with the keyboard is gained though the length of the game does not demand speed. A whole game could easily be played in an evening. Of course, there are saved game options anyway.

Tigers in The Snow is beginning to show its age. It lacks features prevalent in more recent SSI fare and has more faults than any I've reviewed so far. Having said that, it's important to see this game in perspective. It's weak by SSI standards. But it will be a while before anyone else comes out with a better simulation of this era, methinks.

Presentation 81%
Below par but still fairly good.

Graphics 84%
Neat ID markers and stuff. Shame about the screen redrawing instead of scrolling.

Instructions 67%
Very untidy and badly explained.

Authenticity 86%
The game's integrity doesn't suffer as a result of poor presentation features.

Playability 82%
Tricky at first because of the unit control, but you soon get used to it.

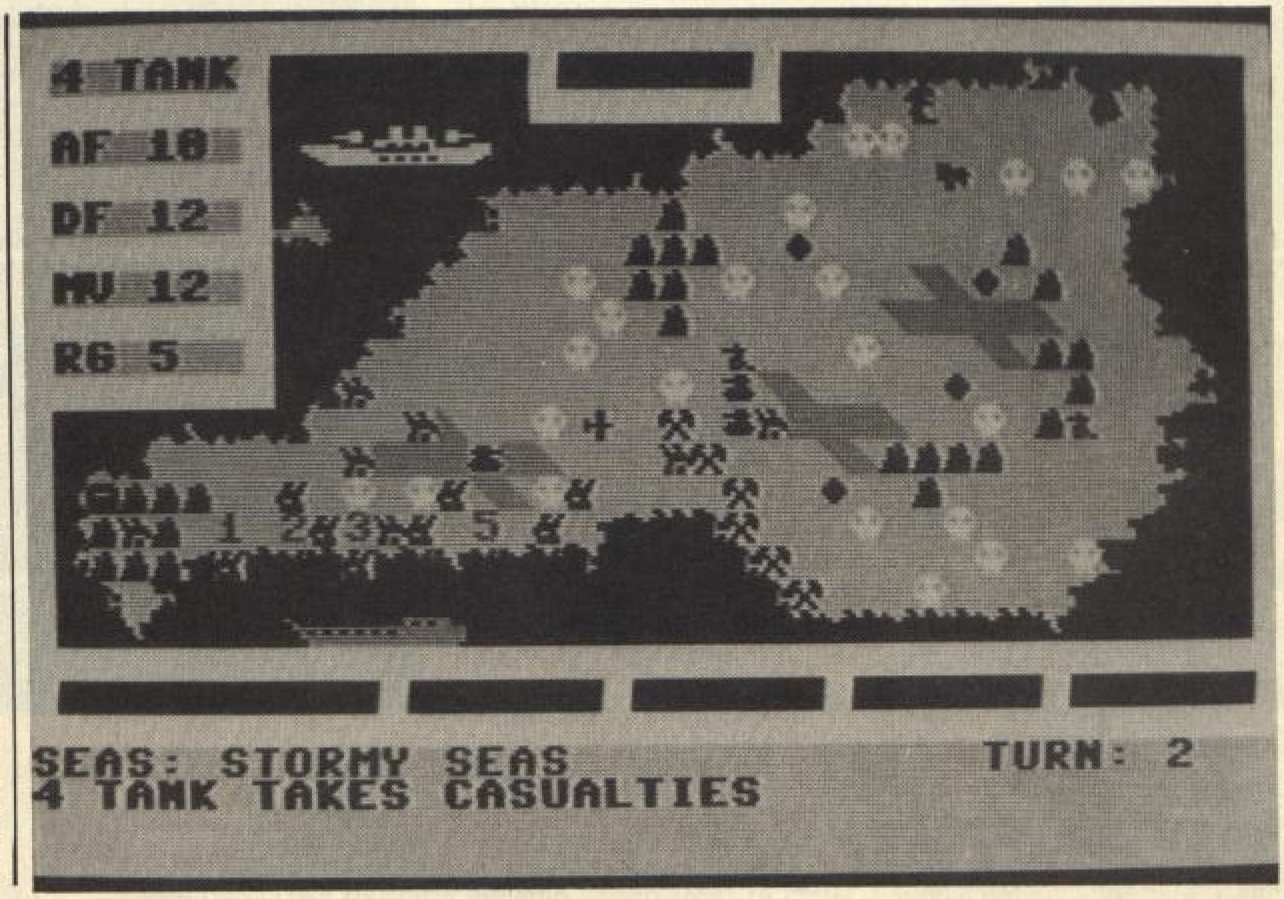
Value for money 87%
Excellent.

Overall 82%
An old but good game at a fair price.

This reconstruction of one of the bloodiest battles of WWII's South Pacific cam paign is the latest in the Strategic Wargames Series begun with *Falklands 82*. It uses a system similar to that of its predecessor with full map display at all times, five levels of difficulty, phased order sequences and a game design that follows in PSS's philosophy of 'playable' games (ie ones that do not take more than a couple of sessions to complete).

As with *Falklands*, the author (James Bethell, who wrote both games) has willingly sacrificed some authenticity for the sake of playability. There is logic to this move. A detailed simulation of the conflict would definitely have strained the limits of a disk based game, let alone one on cassette. The game still tries to cover the battle in reasonable depth.

The package is simple, consisting of a small cassette case and booklet of instructions. Loading takes no more than a couple of minutes (which is a shame as the loading screen is a very good rendition of the planting of the US flag on the beach at Iwo Jima). Once the game has loaded, the first of the aesthetic improvements to Bethell's game system becomes noticable. Everything is joystick driven. In a wargame, there's no reason why this cannot always be the case as the increase in the speed of interaction between player and computer allows straightforward implementation of a strategy, instead of having to put ideas through a needlessly muddled series of arbitrary keyboard interactions.



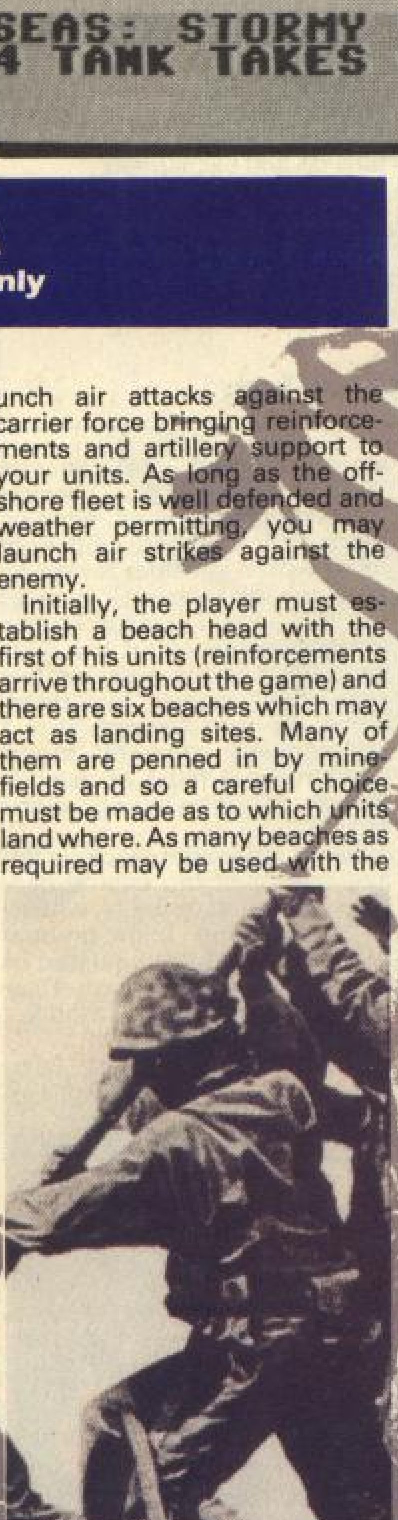
IWO JIMA

PSS, £7.95, cass, Joystick only

All the game functions from selecting difficulty, selecting a unit to order, the orders themselves (Move, Attack, Land, Pass) are simply selected from information windows and confirmed by pressing the fire button. All relevant information on the unit currently selected is also displayed in an information window to the left of the screen. This information is shown in an abstract points system. Units have an aggression factor, de fense factor, movement factor and a range factor, all of which affect combat ability.

The player (as there is no two player option) must always take the side of the American forces, with the objective of eliminating all the enemy units between turns 32 and 36 (depending on the difficulty level set). The enemy may fortify positions, make suicide attacks if a unit is about to be wiped out and launch air attacks against the carrier force bringing reinforcements and artillery support to your units. As long as the offshore fleet is well defended and weather permitting, you may launch air strikes against the enemy.

Initially, the player must establish a beach head with the first of his units (reinforcements arrive throughout the game) and there are six beaches which may act as landing sites. Many of them are penned in by minefields and so a careful choice must be made as to which units land where. As many beaches as required may be used with the single proviso that units may not be stacked in the same area.



That really sums up the game. Getting into the game is an extremely simple process, no doubt because it was designed with beginners in mind. And this brings up the question of why PSS include arcade sequences on their more 'serious' games and yet not on these introductory efforts. Not that I am advocating their use at all, but it does seem rather strange. There is some animation in the game, however. Air strikes by either side are rather crudely depicted by showing a simple aircraft silhouette passing over the target area.

There are faults with this system. Air strikes can only be called either after an attack by ground forces or by a unit that deliberately tries to attack whilst out of range. This really could have been made neater. The limited intelligence used in the game seems to be affected only by proximity and not by terrain. Because the designer has decided to make the whole island visible during play, the display size of the units is very small indeed and when several units are in close proximity, this can lead to confusion. I can see this game appealing to those who feel daunted by some other companies' more complex offerings, but who would still like to venture into the area of wargaming but I must stress that its appeal for the more experienced player is likely to be very limited. Because of the way the author has changed historical details in the name of playability, anybody looking for an accurate means of simulating the battle is likely to be very disappointed with this game.

For all that, the final result is playable and PSS are not demanding that you break the bank to obtain a copy. Someone just looking for a way to pass a couple of hours at the keyboard without wanting to risk a migraine may get something from *Iwo Jima*. For anyone else, steer clear. It probably won't be worth it.

Presentation 72%
Wail laid out instructions but the map looks slightly crowded.

Graphics 60%
A crisp map of Iwo Jima is let down by poor unit markers and terrain features.

Instructions 67%
Great for the beginner but apart from the historical notes (which could have been longer), there is little for the more demanding player.

Authenticity 48%
Too much has been laft out for playability's sake for this to be considered authentic.

Playability 68%
Easy to get into and good, fast interaction makes the game a doddle to play.

Value for money 39%
Cheap but even a beginner would master the game before long.

Overall 39%
Pleasant fun for a minute or two but severely lacking as a wargame.

SILENT SERVICE

US Gold/Microprose, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

Silent Service is the latest in simulations from one of the most respected companies in the field. This one however, is not just another *Flight Simulator* variant. Instead, you take the part of the captain of a US Navy submarine commander in the South Pacific during the second world war. The game comes in a medium sized box complete with instruction booklet and the game itself.

The instruction booklet is a work of art. At fifty pages long, it covers the aims and limitations of the simulation, detailed introduction and instruction on use, pertinent military history from the point of view of WWII Naval research and combat from American and Japanese points of view, a plethora of varied scenarios and tactical advice for novices and experts alike. The presentation is spot on.

Once the parameters of play have been selected, the screen shows the figure of the captain in the conning tower. His default position is at the periscope. By moving the joystick, the figure moves to a different area of the tower. A press of the fire button confirms the move and so selects a new screen with different instructions. Selecting the periscope only works when surfaced (which you practically have to be anyway) and it gives you a view of your immediate surroundings. Moving the joystick left and right allows panning. On the game's lower levels, you have a targeting computer so that any surface vessel that enters the centre of the sights highlights a marker. If a torpedo is fired at this point, it should hit, provided that extreme evasive action is not taken by the enemy. Below the viewing area is all the information about range, heading and so forth of the current target.

Moving right in the tower shows the map screen. This combines sonar and radar to show your current position and that of any vessels and active torpedoes. Heading, speed and depth are displayed at the bottom of the screen and these may all be changed from here. Moving down and right is the quartermaster's log which displays your accomplishments so far in this mission. Moving the joystick straight down takes you to the damage report screen. Two profiles of the submarine are displayed (one solid and one cutaway) with any damaged areas highlighted accordingly.

Moving left in the tower takes you to the gauges screen. The status of the submarine is best monitored and adjusted from here. Apart from the fact that this screen displays all the mechanical data about your vessel, a nice touch is that the whole thing is extremely well drawn with pipes and buttons giving an almost 'ordered chaos' look to the screen. Moving up from the bridge gives you a binocular option (only available when surfaced) and moving down and right selects the continue patrol option which is normally selected after a successful engagement.

Apart from being able to practise at just running the sub and taking part in simple engagements, there are scenarios of varying complexity. As these are set at different times during the war, details such as the modification of torpedoes and capabilities of both your vessel and those of the enemy are taken into account. This means that some of your torpedoes may be duds (a problem which plagued American sub forces until late in the war). Alternatively, you may be able to take the sub to greater depths while the Japanese escorts may be better equipped in terms of radar or use different hunting techniques.

The simulation makes effective use of sound to let you know when certain things have occurred. One of the best examples of this is the firing of a torpedo. One minute, everything is quiet but a couple of seconds after the torpedo has been fired, a dull boom follwed by a wooshing sound effectively gives the impression of the power of the weapon. If the launch was monitored from the periscope, the torpedo can be seen homing in on its target. Which brings me to the point about graphics. Simulations of this type often need little in the way of graphics but those employed by this game are of a very high standard indeed.

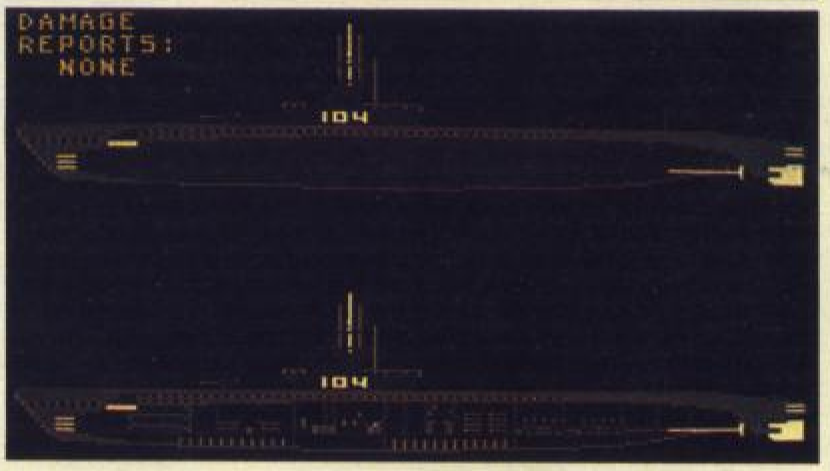
Unless you read the histories at the back of the instruction booklet, much of the significance of the simulation is likely to elude you. The author, Sid Meier (*Decision in the Desert* and *Crusade in Europe*) has taken his work very seriously and done the necessary research. It has paid off. Apart from the professional look and feel of the game, the atmosphere created is one of tension and excitement.

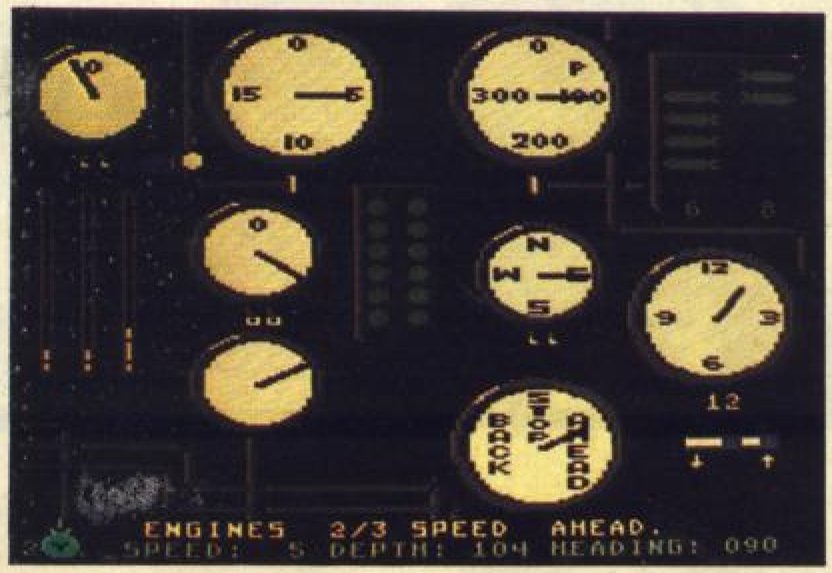
An option which I neglected to mention earlier is the use of the deck gun. Submarine deck guns were not fitted with elaborate aiming mechanisms because they were rarely used. No submarine commander in his right mind would consider taking on even the smallest destroyer as the sub would inevitably lose the engagement. But the guns were fitted just in case and this simulation caters for them. Firing the gun requires that a few ranging shots be made. Don't make a habit of using it though. It won't win many battles.

Game parameters include the intelligence of the enemy destroyers, limited visibility, whether or not the angle-on-bow needs to be input (a vital part of manual torpedo aiming). They allow sophisticated modification to any scenario.

The simulation has been extremely well thought out and does not appear to be flawed in any considerable respect. The campaigns are exciting and develop well as the player becomes more accustomed to the program. The main question must be how much will a submarine simulation capture people's imaginations, regardless of how well it has been implemented? I cannot help but feel that the game will have a somewhat limited appeal. However, if you have an open mind and want a challenging piece of software, then I cannot recommend this product highly enough.







Presentation 89%
Excellent packaging and on screen options provide varied games that should last a long time.

Graphics 88%
Of a very high standard for the type of game.

Instructions 95%
Progress logically and the notes at the back make fascinating reading.

Authenticity 92%
The attention to detail is excellent.

Playability 86%
Difficult until the controls are mastered and as this is a simulation, mastering the controls is not the easiest of tasks. . . .

Value for money 87%
Going rate for good simulations.

Overall 88%
May have limited appeal but otherwise excellent in every respect.



ZZAP! T-SHIRTS/SWEATSHIRTS/CAPS/BINDERS OFFER

All quoted prices include VAT, post and packing (UK only). Continental Europe and Overseas, please add £2 extra per item ordered.

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DESIGN A DROID AND

ZZAP! COMP



The poor overworked little darlings whose ego-boosting portraits appear in the ZZAP! reviews have been complaining of late. "Too much work" they moan inbetween sending off for hampers of goodies to sustain them through a hardworking day of reading back issues of 2000AD and nipping down to the local hostelry for a few pints of Old Flatulence Bitter. "Too much work", they cry, as they exchange ribald witticisms with visiting chums like Flathead Andy from Activision who has a special haircut so he can stand on his head for hours on end and emulate an ashtray . . . .

Nobody, of course, listens to the pleas of your humble Competition Minion who has to wade through piles of mail, sort out prizes for you to win and devise cunning competition ideas. Nobody even thinks to ask yours truly if he'd like a sticky bun or sarnie to help him last the morning. Oh no. It's just "Too much work" from the pouting primadonnas whose portraits 'grace' the pages of this wonderful magazine.

And "It's against the union rules, John" comes the reply, if I merely mention that it would be nice if my likeness was ap-

WIN A £120, TEN GEAR MILK

Five 12 month ZZAP! subscriptions up for gr
HATS AND T SHIRTS for runners up

Raleigh's MILK RACE SPECIAL racing bike is a pretty impressive piece of machinery with Sachs-Huret gears, italienne handlebar and a close clearance racing geometry frame. Soon, a lucky ZZAP! reader will be cycling round on one of these bikes courtesy of Newsfield, the publishers of ZZAP!.

We're offering this bike, together with an ZZAP! T Shirt and an ZZAP! hat to keep the sun from beating down on the cranium while the winner is cycling round showing off his or her prize. Ten runners up will also receive ZZAP! T Shirts by way of consolation, and five ZZAP! readers won't have to buy a copy of their favourite magazine for a whole twelve months — we're giving away subscriptions too.

To enter this competition and stand a chance of cycling round in style, we want you to hunt thought the wordsquare that appears here and find as many names of ZZAP! writers and contributors as you can. Jot the names you find on a piece of paper, complete the entry form and whizz it off to ZZAP! CYCLING COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive before 8th May and you could be pedalling round in style.

Don't forget to add your shirt size to the entry form as well as the size of frame you'd like your Milk Race Special bike to have if yours is the first all-correct entry out of the hat. Mark the number of ZZAP! type names you found in the wordsquare on the back of the envelope as well, please, to make the judging just that little bit easier. Go on, pretty please. It's not much to ask, seeing as we're giving away a bike, is it?



COLLECT A COMMODORE!

pended to the odd competition page. "NUPPROPP wouldn't hear of it", they tell me. "The National Union for the Protection of the Portrait Rights of Pouting Primadonnas is quite clear in its rule book", they explain, casting yet another boxful of letters in my general direction. "Gerronwith opening them, mateyboots" they say.

Ha! It's time the Wapping Syndrome caught up with the ZZAP! reviewing team. Replace them with droids that don't need feeding, haven't got egos and work for more than five minutes at a stretch without a cup of tea, pint of Old Flatulence or trip down to the sarnie shop. WHICH IS WHERE YOU COME IN, DEAR READER.

Design a droid, or two or even four if you think the entire motley crew should be replaced. Send in your drawings and spec sheets for the Mechanised ZZAP! reviewer(s) and it might scare these guys into being nicer.

I'll make it worth your while, my lovelies, don't you worry. Best set of mechanical wizardry will win its originator a brand spanking new Commodore 64 computer complete with its very own 1541 disc drive. Not bad eh? And I've rooted round in the Newsfield stockroom and found half a dozen ZZAP! Hats and Sweatshirts. So one lucky person will get the hardware and a bit of softwear, while five more fellows or fellowesses will collect some comfy couture to cuddle up in.

Entries please, to ROBOT REVIEWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ to arrive by 8th of May when I'll open all your entries and scare the daylights out of these poseurs . . .

C64 and a 1541 Disc Drive up for grabs!

ZZAP! COMP

RACE SPECIAL RACING BIKE

rabs

MILK RACE



ENTRY FORM
ZZAP! CYCLING COMPETITION

P	D	I	M	R	I	G	N	A	L	L	S	R
F	A	J	B	E	B	O	N	Y	N	P	I	E
R	U	U	R	N	G	I	E	H	E	O	D	N
C	B	L	L	M	S	R	H	N	O	U	E	I
D	A	I	I	V	F	H	N	T	B	N	N	H
I	K	M	B	S	E	A	N	C	E	D	O	S
M	E	C	E	A	D	G	A	R	Y	I	S	J
O	A	K	I	R	Y	G	A	B	F	K	R	U
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D	D	Y	O	L	L	M	K	C	I	D	M	M

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

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.... POST CODE ....

T SHIRT SIZE ....

FRAME SIZE
(Circle One): 21 inch, 23 inch, 25 inch

PALACE S

Who would believe that a software house could release only two games in as many years, and still make enough money to stay alive . . . and fund ambitious projects? To discover the glittering secrets of the evil dead, we sent our resident zombie, GARY PENN, to see . . .

Towards the end of 1983 Pete Stone decided that he wanted to get into software. He was running the Video Palace (a store in London which sells all manner of records, videos, computer software and the like) at the time and as the computer side of things was doing well, he started a software house with the help of electronics whizz Richard Leinfellner. With the financial backing of Palace Films, Palace Software was born in January 1984. Their first release, written by Richard, was based on Sam Raimi's controversial 'video nasty' *The Evil Dead*, and hit the streets that summer. It did reasonably well, despite a few unfavourable reviews, and featured quite prominently in the charts. No doubt the subject material of the game helped to achieve sales . . .

As *The Evil Dead* neared completion, work began on the next project: *Cauldron*. Pete started looking for new people to join the duo on a permanent basis. His search was fruitful and with the arrival of artist Steve Brown in late 1984, Palace Software began to grow.

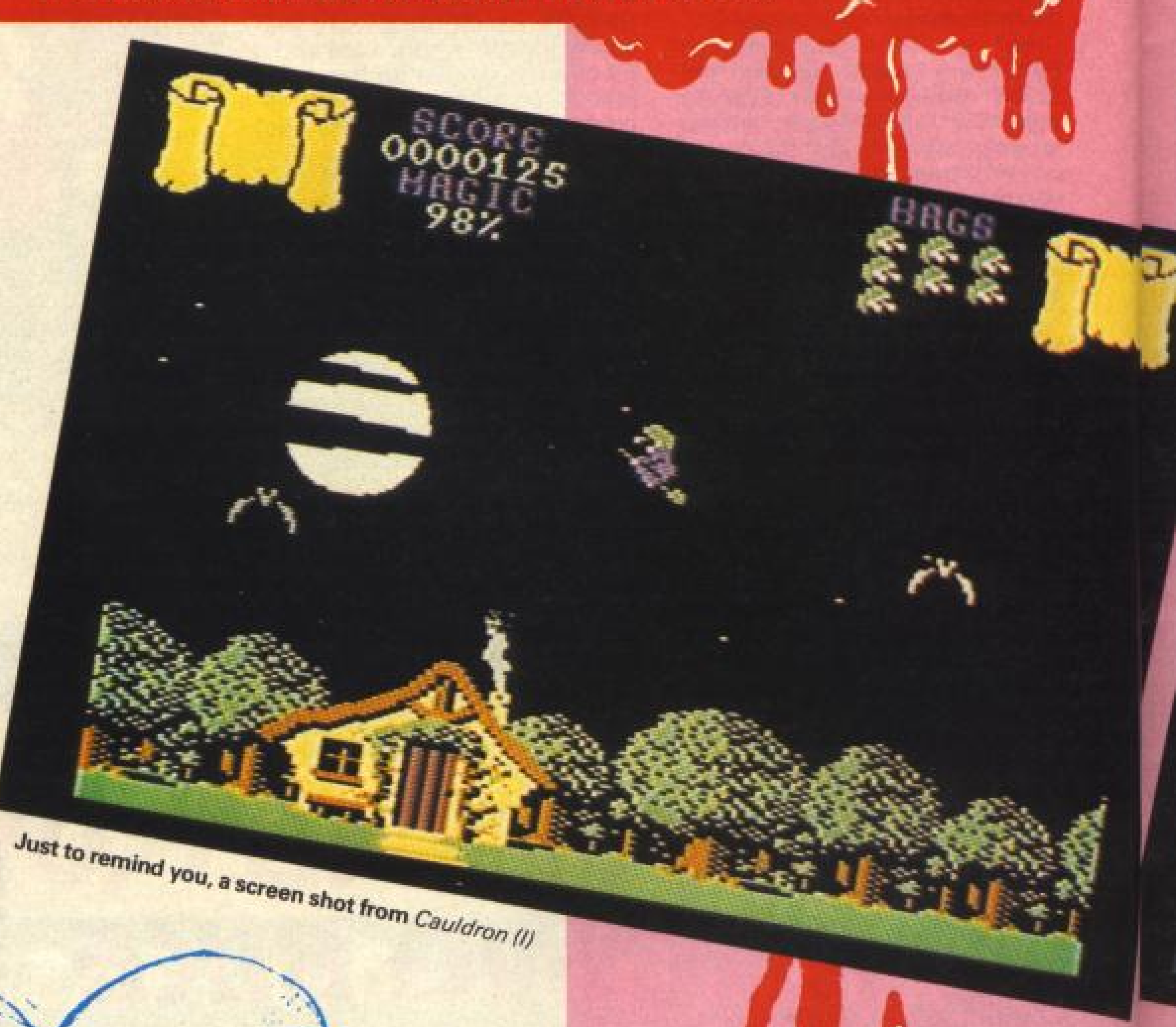
Before he joined, Steve did work for advertising agencies, although he has produced a few covers for *White Dwarf* magazine by way of light relief. He came to art late in life, starting at art college in his mid-twenties after spending a while doing a variety of things. Now he's firmly settled with Palace, producing stylish graphics on the computer screen.

It took the better part of a year for Richard Leinfellner to program *Cauldron*, while Steve designed the graphics and did the artwork which was used for the inlay and advertisments. When the game was finally released in April 85, it stirred up a great deal of interest amongst the gamesplaying public and gave Palace Software their first hit. But that was over a year ago, and since then very little has been heard from them. So where are they now, and more importantly, what are they doing?

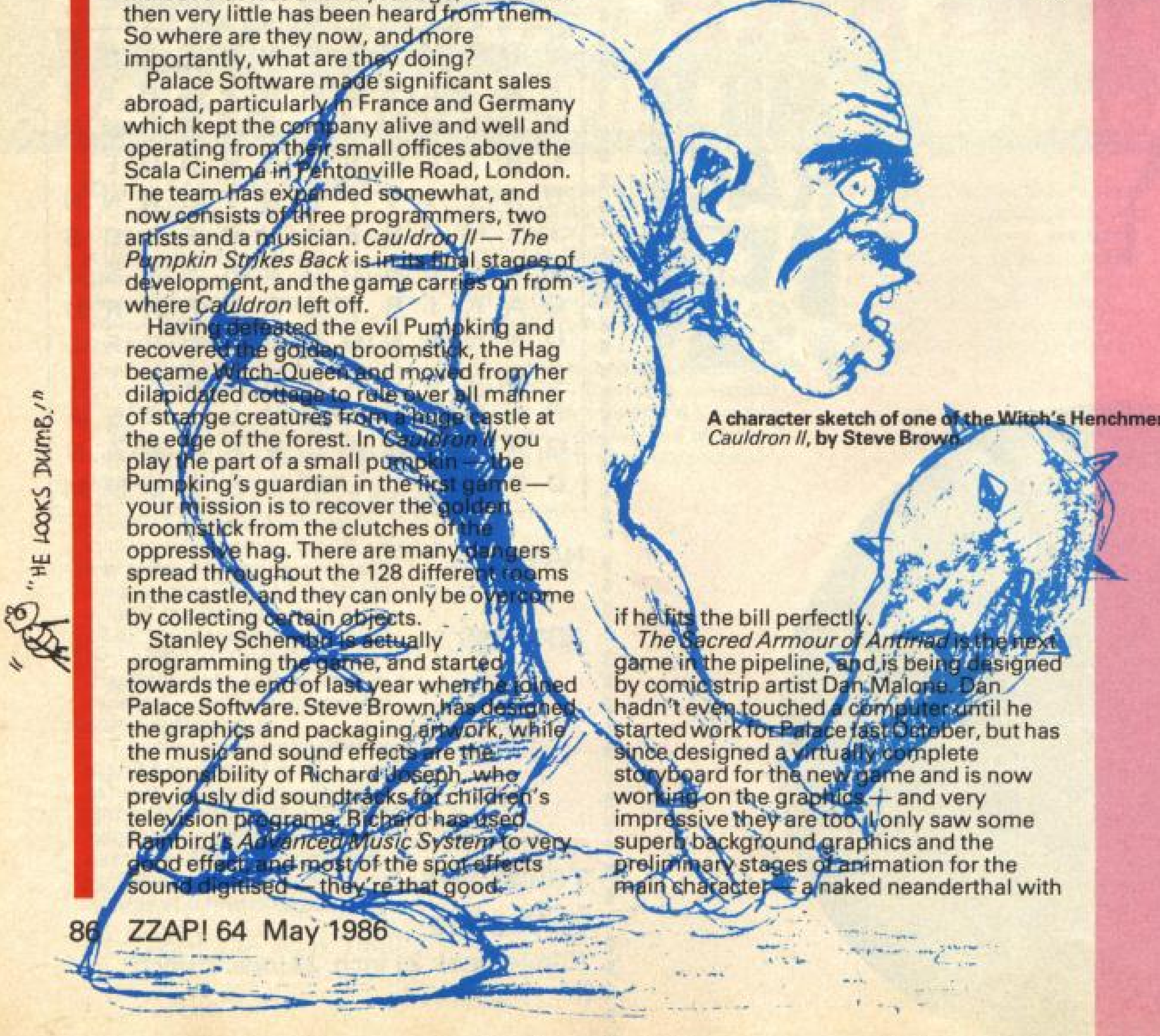
Palace Software made significant sales abroad, particularly in France and Germany which kept the company alive and well and operating from their small offices above the Scala Cinema in Pentonville Road, London. The team has expanded somewhat, and now consists of three programmers, two artists and a musician. *Cauldron II — The Pumpkin Strikes Back* is in its final stages of development, and the game carries on from where *Cauldron* left off.

Having defeated the evil Pumpking and recovered the golden broomstick, the Hag became Witch-Queen and moved from her dilapidated cottage to rule over all manner of strange creatures from a huge castle at the edge of the forest. In *Cauldron II* you play the part of a small pumpkin — the Pumpking's guardian in the first game — your mission is to recover the golden broomstick from the clutches of the oppressive hag. There are many dangers spread throughout the 128 different rooms in the castle, and they can only be overcome by collecting certain objects.

Stanley Schembri is actually programming the game, and started towards the end of last year when he joined Palace Software. Steve Brown has designed the graphics and packaging artwork, while the music and sound effects are the responsibility of Richard Joseph, who previously did soundtracks for children's television programs. Richard has used Rainbird's *Advanced Music System* to very good effect, and most of the spot effects sound digitised — they're that good.



Just to remind you, a screen shot from *Cauldron (I)*



A character sketch of one of the Witch's Henchmen, seen in *Cauldron II*, by Steve Brown.



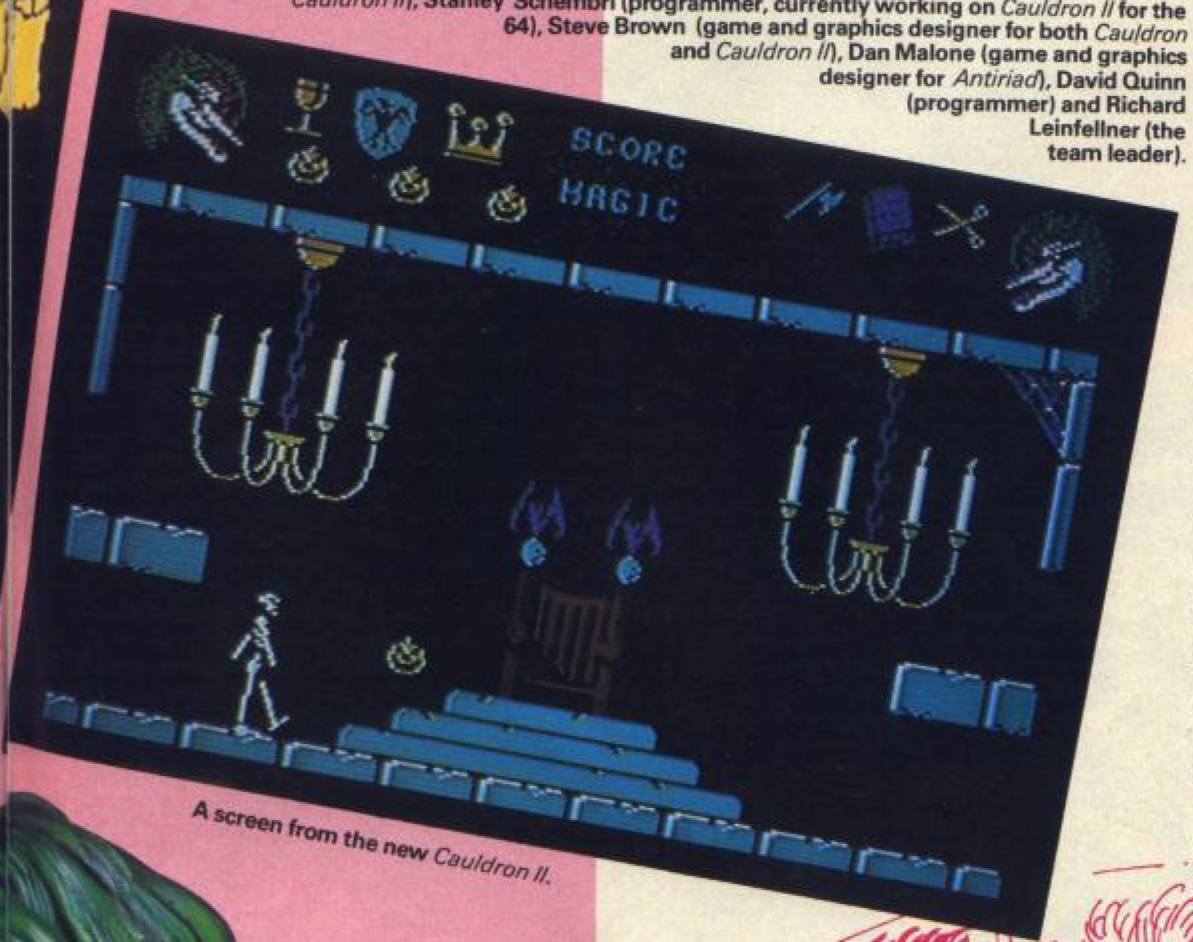
... if he fits the bill perfectly.

The Sacred Armour of Antiriad is the next game in the pipeline, and is being designed by comic strip artist Dan Malone. Dan hadn't even touched a computer until he started work for Palace last October, but has since designed a virtually complete storyboard for the new game and is now working on the graphics — and very impressive they are too. I only saw some superb background graphics and the preliminary stages of animation for the main character — a naked neanderthal with

SOFTWARE



The Palace Software Games Team. Left to right: Richard Joseph (musician doing the music and FX for *Cauldron II*), Stanley Schembri (programmer, currently working on *Cauldron II* for the 64), Steve Brown (game and graphics designer for both *Cauldron* and *Cauldron II*), Dan Malone (game and graphics designer for *Antiriad*), David Quinn (programmer) and Richard Leinfellner (the team leader).



A screen from the new *Cauldron II*.



Steve Brown's cover artwork for *Cauldron II*.



Dan Malone's sketch for ZZAP!, which speaks for itself.

Although the music and special effects hadn't been included into the program when I saw it, Stan took me on a quick guided tour of the castle and Mr Joseph supplied the appropriate noises from a another 64. The small pumpkin boings and sproings about the place in a most amusing manner, while the witch snores with uncanny comic realism, and cackles in a most unnerving way when a life is lost. The title screen music also sounds stunning. Pete Stone spent a long time looking for someone who understood sound, and Richard certainly looks, or rather sounds, as

a convenient growth of hair — but it was enough to convince me of Mr Malone's talent, since both definition and movement are first class, right down to the sweaty gleam of muscles as he runs, jumps and crouches.

Pete Stone decided that Palace needed another artist to take the pressure off Steve Brown if the company was to expand its portfolio of programming projects. So, Pete and Richard spent ages looking for the right person, interviewing lots of artists and they had almost given up hope when an art college lecturer who had heard of their search for a talented comic-book artist got in touch. She remembered that Dan had left his course at art college — he spent all his time sitting in the back of the class drawing comics — and recommended him for the job. Late last year Dan brought his portfolio to the Cinema and was hired immediately.

Dan's talents for comic-book art have been applied to the design of the graphics, and his works should feature in the inlay — which will set the scene for the game in the form of a small sixteen page 'comic'.

The game takes place after the Holocaust, in which humanity virtually destroyed each itself. A few people survived but civilation regressed and tribes formed. People worship the god Antiriad, a strange effigy discovered in the subterranean world now inhabited by the survivors of the holocaust. However, the Elders of the tribes know the truth behind the legend — the great god Antiriad is nothing more than an Anti-Rad suit, used as protection against radioactive fallout during The War. At least the myth keeps the people happy . . . .

All is peaceful until **They** arrive to disrupt the tranquillity. A group of aliens land and set up shop in a dead volcano, striking fear into the hearts of the tribespeople, doing a whole range of frightening and generally unpleasant things to the humans they come across. The people pray to their god for help, but to no avail. So, in desparation, they turn to the Elders for advice. The Elders decide that the Sacred Armour of Antiriad is required to repel the invaders, and a hero is chosen to recover the suit, penetrate the fortress and dispose of the threat posed by the alien visitors. Which is where you come in! But the way is fraught with danger, and who knows what evil lurks beyond the forest . . . ?

Palace hope to have a large number of locations, plenty of action and variety in gameplay. For example, before the volcano can be entered, the armour must be found and worn since the alien base has a high radiation content. Without the suit it is possible to run, jump and move freely, whereas wearing it restricts movement. However, the suit does offer greater protection, and must be worn to combat the alien race. As the game is subject to changes, I shan't say anything else about it other than it looks great and there will be more details on *The Sacred Armour of Antiriad* in the near future.

When *The Fourth Protocol* was released last year it impressed a lot of people, including Palace Software — so much so, that they asked if the Electronic Pencil Company would write them a game. The EPC consented, but were busy with *Zoids* for Martech at the time, so the Palace project had to be temporarily shelved. Now *Zoids* is out of the way, work can begin on the game for Palace which should be finished by the end of this year. Rupert Bowater and Paul Norris, who both recently left the Electronic Pencil Company to form their own programming team — Binary Vision are actually writing the software, as the original Eltronic Pencil Company is no more. Very little information about this game is available yet — it's still looking for a title, and is described by Rupert Bowater as 'a tropical escapade set between the first and second world wars'. Expect to see something at the PCW show in September.

COMING SOON TO A...

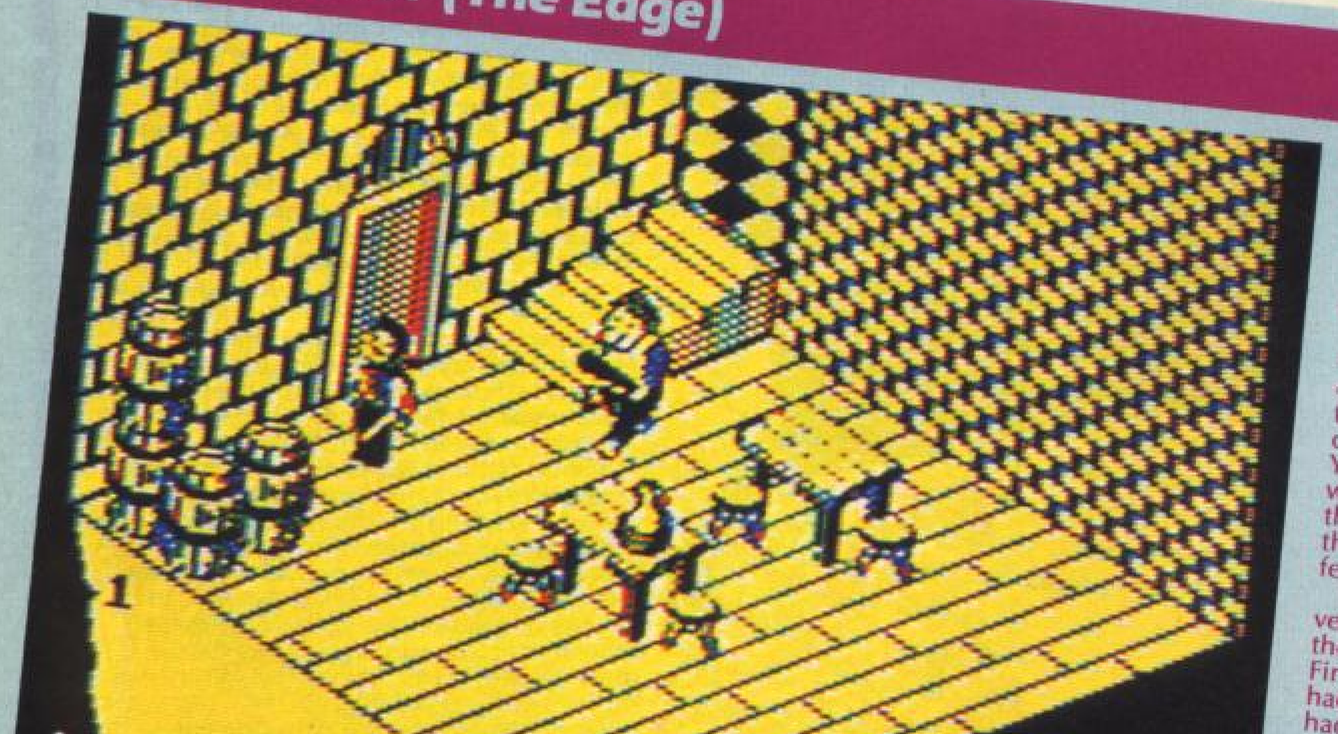
An early look at some future releases, courtesy of the ZZAP! previewing team.

TIME TRAX (Argus Press/Mindgames)

Set after the holocaust, *Time Trax* puts you in the boots of one of the few survivors, with the objective of recovering a number of runestones scattered over seven time zones. Each zone consists of several screens, with plenty of nasties to hinder progress but lots of objects to help. Icons are used to good effect, and allow many different actions to be performed with the joystick. As you can see from the screen shot, the graphics are great — and the game itself looks pretty good too! *Time Trax* will cost £9.95 on cassette and is virtually complete, so you should see a full review next month.



FAIRLIGHT (The Edge)



John Minson takes a peek at The Edge's next release

Fairlight originally appeared on the Spectrum at the same time as *Wizardry* on the 64, but while the latter was based primarily around problem solving, the former gave you more of the freedom of a role playing game. The plot concerns that time honoured theme of a land robbed of good, hope — and daylight. Obviously a hero is needed — but who?

Isvar was an ordinary sort of fellow, and certainly not the type to see himself venturing into the terrible Castle Avars to save the land. But then came the day when he strayed into Ogri's Wood and received a call from the Sorceror who was trapped in the castle. Isvar must find the Book of Light and take it to the Wizard, or he and the once beautiful land of Fairlight will perish. Which is how the game begins, with Isvar transported into the main courtyard, armed only with a sword, and already faced with a whirling elemental eager to sap his strength.

One of the great strengths of *Fairlight* is its total 3D accuracy, which means that careful mapping can give clues to hidden rooms and the like. There are keys, food, hourglasses and other objects scattered about the castle to help Isvar in his quest, but set against him are a wealth of nasties, such as guards who spring out of the ground, trolls, and semi-transparent bubbles which wound him when they burst. There are also 'snap dragons' — literally Isvar-eating flowers!

The castle provides a beautifully detailed and highly credible environment for the adventure that lies ahead, and is colour coded according to the level. You can wander round like you would in a real castle, and while there is one key puzzle to finding the Book of Light, there are different paths to it.

There were problems in converting the solid, 3D setting of the Spectrum version to the 64. Firstly, using sprites as *Wizardry* had, was right out — everything had to have a Z coordinate to place it in space. This has meant using the machine in a mode more like the Spectrum and led to initial problems of speed, both of character movement and the blackouts as each screen is drawn. But these are now solved, and The Edge are well pleased with the conversion that Trevor Inns has done of Bo Jangeborg's work. Said Dr Tim Langdell, big cheese at The Edge, 'We've tried to go as close to the original as possible. People said this kind of 3D couldn't be done. Ultimate and Firebird still haven't done conversions of *Alien 8* and *Knight Lore*.' In addition the 64 version boasts much enhanced music, by the people who composed the *Wizardry* soundtrack.

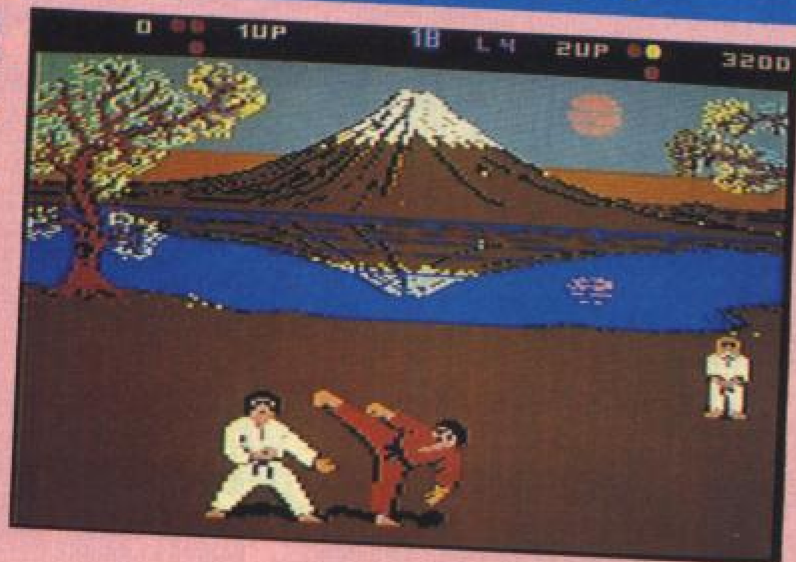
Fairlight *will appear mid-March at a cost of £9.95 on cassette, and there will be a review next issue.*

A 64 NEAR YOU . . .

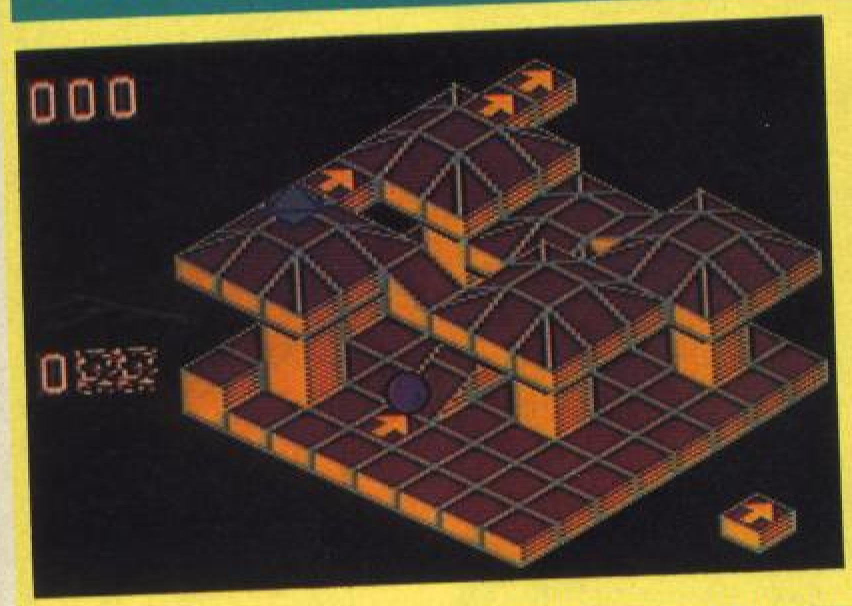
INTERNATIONAL KARATE (System 3)

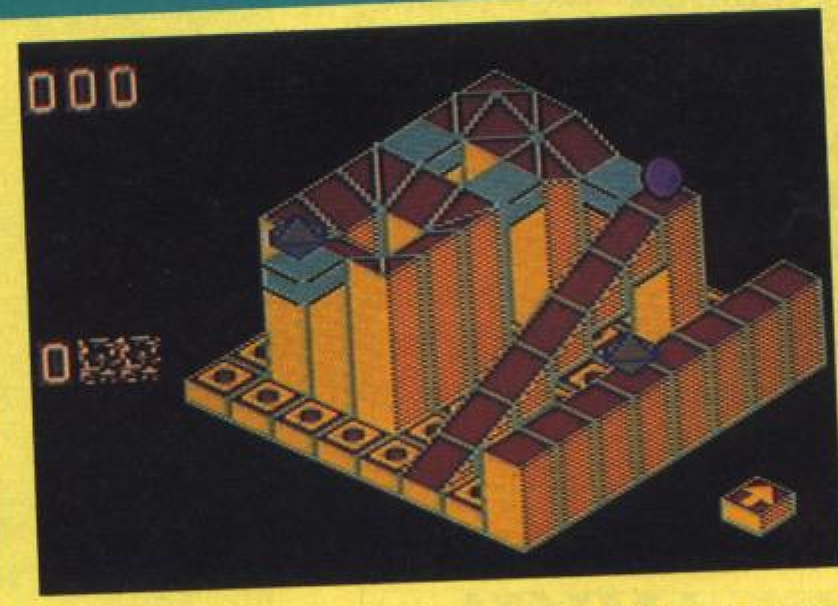
After much publicity (unkind people may well call it hype) a preview copy of the much promised *International Karate* has finally managed to make its way into the ZZAP! offices. *International Karate* was originally written on the Atari and then dropped across to the 64. Surprisingly enough this conversion process only took a couple of weeks. Graphically *International Karate* seems superior to all its competitors — there are eight different backdrops in all, and each of them is very pretty. The characters are also superbly drawn, and are equally well animated.

The pace of the game is very fast and furious indeed, as we found with our pre—production copy. But what makes *International Karate* stand out from the crowd is the number of 'cute' little touches throughout. One particularly nice feature is when the fighters are left alone for too long, they turn to face you and give an evil stare to convey their annoyance at being neglected. However, the most impressive factor is the price — at only £6.50 *International Karate* is a steal. Mark Cale said he wanted to give the kids a good deal, and it looks as if he wasn't 'giving it the large 'un'. Full review by the ZZAP! team next month (honest)!



SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)



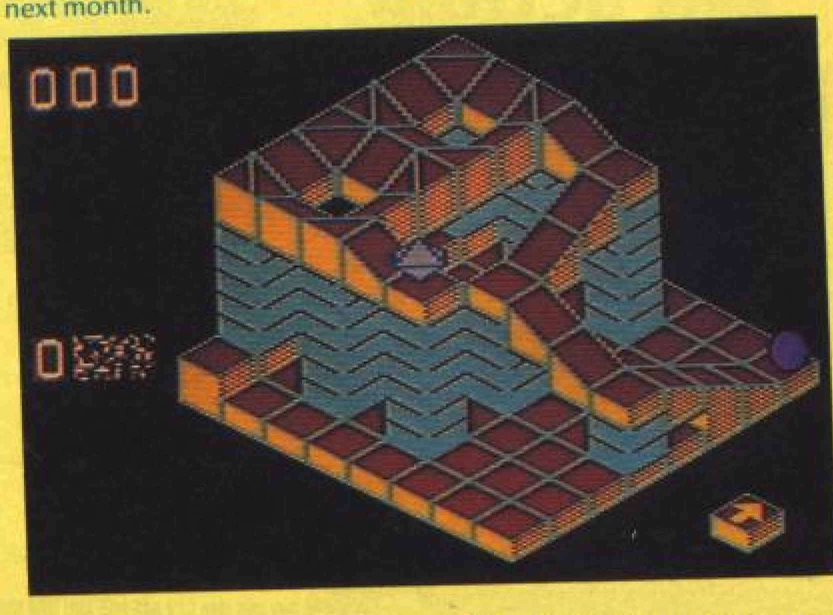


Spindizzy puts the player into a new and totally unexplored dimension where worlds hang in space. As part of the government's grant driven, new world exploration scheme, you have been enlisted as a YTS cartographer and are in control of a potentially amorphous craft over the alien terrain.

The idea of the game is to map out as much of the world as possible with the energy supplied, but since there is the twinkle of promotion in your eye, you aim to do a good job. By collecting the energy crystals scattered around the place it's possible to further your stay and map out a lot more of the world. This will impress — and you know it.

The screens 'flick' from one to the other as your craft flits between them. As the whole project is grant funded, the equipment is cheap and doesn't even fly — it just rolls along the floor. A joystick is used to control the craft, and such things as inertia and momentum all have to be considered when whizzing about. The problems to solve are a mixture of logical and physical. The logical side of things include the use of a number of lift mechanisms that have to be activated and de-activated, while the physical entails putting yourself into precarious situations to get at the energy crystals.

Paul Shirley, author of Incentive's underground hit *Confuzion*, wrote *Spindizzy* for the Amstrad originally and showed it to Electric Dreams as a finished product. **Rod Cousens**, managing director of Activision's sub-label, was so impressed that a deal was struck almost immediately. Part of the bargain was that Paul should convert the game to the 64, a task he accomplished in little more than a month. The version seen by the ZZAP! team was very nearly complete, only awaiting the finishing touches before going into production. Even so it was very impressive indeed. *Spindizzy* will retail for £9.95 on cassette and should be available from mid—April. Watch out for the full review next month.



HAVE YOU GOT THE TIME TO TRAVEL TO SEE WHO?



DOCTOR WHO

WIN A VISIT TO A TV STUDIO REHEARSAL

Twenty DR WHO packs on offer

The people down at **Micro Power** are well pleased that their game featuring The Doctor is now finished. The Doctor? DR WHO, of course. To mark the occasion they're offering ZZAP! readers the chance to win an expenses-paid trip to watch an episode of DR WHO in rehearsal at a BBC Studio.

In the game, *Dr Who and the Mines of Terror* you have to battle against The Master who plans to take control of the cosmos with the aid of a modified Time Instant Replay Unit stolen from the Time Lords. The Master has set up his laboratory on the planet Riju, where the rare and wondrous mineral Heatonite is mined. The mines are patrolled by vicious robotic guards and contain incredibly powerful beasts, Madrags, which attack any living creature they come across.

The Doctor has been sent to Riju by the Time Lords who want to recover the TIRU and thwart The Master's plans — your mission in the game is to help The Doctor in any way you can. He has been provided with an assistant by the Time Lords — The Splinx, which is a cat-like droid with the power to fetch and carry for its master. The Splinx cannot be detected by the security systems that operate in the Mines of Terror, so should prove immensely useful to the Doctor, who is unarmed and generally defenceless.

Micro Power have arranged for the winner of this competition to visit the BBC studio where the TV programme is made — the winner will get to meet The Doctor in person and watch how his TV series is produced. Twenty runners up will be consoled by a copy of the Micro Power DR WHO PACK, specially assembled for this comp and containing a DR WHO TECHNICAL MANUAL which is a handbook for Dr Who fans, containing details on a whole range of the monsters and evil beings Dr Who has been up against in his travels, as well as information on the TARDIS and other technological gagetry. The DR WHO PACK also contains an A3, plastic laminated poster, a T Shirt, badge and bookmark as well as a DR WHO eraser to take you back in time, allowing you to correct mistakes!

To enter the competition, you'll have to study the two pictures Oli has drawn here and mark the differences you find on Picture B. Send Picture B together with the entry form to DR WHO COMPETITION, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 8th May and you could be in with the chance of taking a very interesting trip indeed . . .

A



ZZAP! COMP

Mark the differences you spot on this picture and complete the entry form:

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

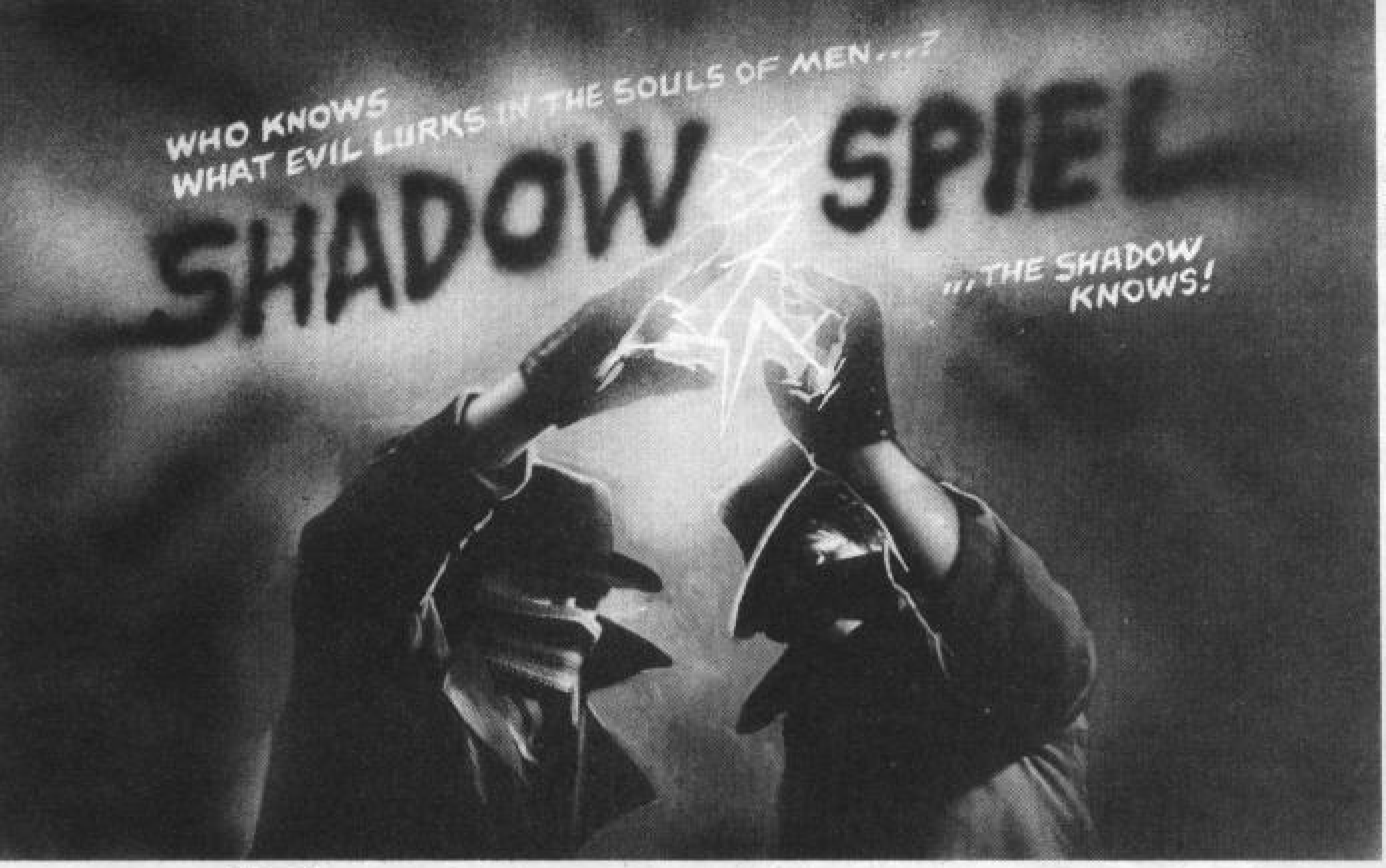
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SHADOW SPIEL

ANOTHER MASKED CRUSADER TAKES TO THE BINARY BY-WAYS

Bat Man, the crime fighting entrepeneur of Gotham City whose truthseeking talents are akin to those of **The Shadow**, will shortly be appearing, along with his raucous young chappie sidekick Robin, on the 64 courtesy of Ocean. Sadly Ocean's binary interpretation is not based on the early seventies Neil Adams Bat Man — it is more of an 'Adam West' portrayal, and takes place in a 3D Ultimate type world. The Caped Crusader cassette hits your screens in May, at a price of £8.95.



FROM THE PENUMBRAL PEN...

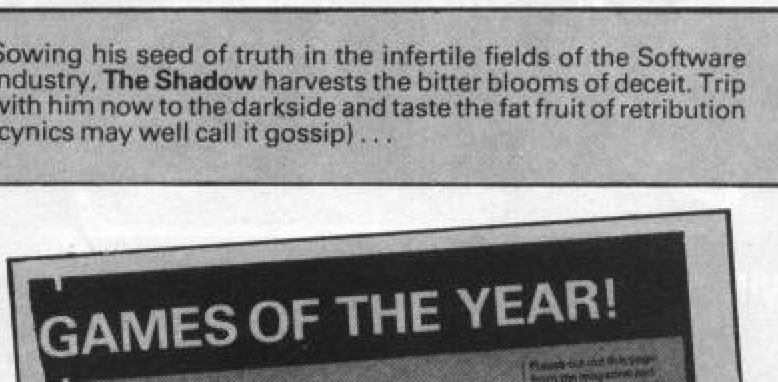
Sowing his seed of truth in the infertile fields of the Software Industry, **The Shadow** harvests the bitter blooms of deceit. Trip with him now to the darkside and taste the fat fruit of retribution (cynics may well call it gossip) . . .

HE NO LONGER GETS SAND KICKED IN HIS EYES!!

It comes to the attention of **The Shadow** that Andrew Braybrook's latest — though not his greatest, for in the eyes of **The Shadow**, Paradroid is still his best — *Uridium*, is currently outselling all other software by a considerable margin. According to software sales voyeurs, Gallup, it amassed even more sales than all six versions of Yie Ar Kung-Fu. Impressive figures indeed — congratulations must go to Andrew on his long overdue success.

THEY WERE MIND-SMEARED!

Just for the record, the ZZAP! April Fool that appeared last issue eventually attracted five software houses — Beyond, Nexus, Mirrorsoft, Firebird and Bug Byte. It just goes to show, you shouldn't believe everything you read in the papers — unless of course, it's written by **The Shadow**.



GAMES OF THE YEAR!

BEST GAME OVERALL	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST PLATFORM GAME	BOOTY	FIREBIRD
BEST SHOOT EM UP	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE	THE HELM	FIREBIRD
BEST GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE	SUBSUNK	FIREBIRD
BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST SPORTS SIMULATION	SUPER RIDER (TT RIDER)	FIREBIRD
BEST WARGAME	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST GRAPHICS	ELITE	FIREBIRD
BEST SOUND FX	CHIMERA	FIREBIRD
BEST MUSIC	CHIMERA	FIREBIRD
TACKIEST GAME OF THE YEAR	SUPER RIDER	FIREBIRD
STATE OF THE ART AWARD	ELITE	FIREBIRD

Name: PHIL PRATT
Address: FIREBIRD

Rumour has it that some software houses attempted to influence the outcome of the ZZAP! Readers Awards by voting heavily for their own games, so it was most amusing to find this veritable faux pas amongst the voting forms . . . Tut tut, Mr Pratt.

A SNIPPET FROM RADIO TRUTH...

Micro Classic's Intruder . . .
. . . comes intruder window. Ha! **The Shadow** will refrain from such trite and puerile humour to bring you news of *Intruder*, a new arcade adventure from Micro Classic, whose previous release was *The Chess Game*. To quote Micro Classic's Managing Director Peter Hodkin from the press release: 'It has a broadly Ultimate type look and feel, however the graphics are stronger and more detailed. The 3D is very realistic, with FULL perspective throughout. In achieving real smooth 3D animation more than 16,000 different sprites are generated. Movement is totally free, one can climb, pick up objects, throw objects and fire guns — using the joystick alone, and with ease'.

Unfortunately, the finished product won't be available until May at the earliest. Stay tuned to Radio Truth for any further developments.



This month sees the introduction of **The Shadow**'s Interesting Letters Column, and what an interesting month it is too . .

BEYOND

Telephone 01-837 2899

CHALLENGING SOFTWARE

Lector Court
151 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3AD

William Delaney
Mary Linehan
Francis Lee
Simon Goodwin
Clive Bailey

Date: May 23rd 1985

Chris Anderson
Zzap 64
1, Church Terrace
YEOVIL
Somerset
BA20 1HX

Dear Chris,

re: QUAKE MINUS ONE

I write to confirm our conversation of today's date. I will co-operate with Zzap to protect the exclusivity of your review.

Between now and the arrival of the finished game I need to build awareness for both Monolith games. So I shall be drip-feeding Boulder Dash II to the press (I only have one other copy) and putting the enclosed demo of Quake out and about with my second draft rules (considerably condensed from the copy you hold.)

As I get progressively more finished versions of Quake I will pass them to you. Hopefully, we will get the final version around the 10th of June. That, too, I will pass to you. I passed Mike & Warren's phone number to Julian Rignall the other day, they may be of use if you want to do the official hints & tips.

I'll plug the review gap, between June 26th and the September issues (appearing August 15th) with Popular Computing Weekly, the regional press and my 'news' stories.

I hope that the terms of my second paragraph will balance my need to build awareness and your need to protect the 'exclusivity'.

Speak to you soon,

Clive

Clive Bailey.

PS And you can have five Shadowfire T-Shirts for the five best Shadowfire maps.

Registered Office: Durrant House, Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5EJ. Registered No. 1622021
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Dear Mike & Warren,

re: QUAKE MINUS ONE

We have done a deal with Zzap 64 to get Rockford's Riot and Quake Minus One on the front cover of the August issue. The cover will be backed up with in-depth reviews inside. Plus a section on Quake hints and tips. I reckon that will add up to around five pages of editorial.

The terms of the deal are that we don't give live versions of the game out to other publications until the launch of the game.That is'nt too much of a pain as most reviews will occur in September issues (appearing mid-August). In the August issues (appearing mid-july) we will rely on news awareness, Popular Computing Weekly and the fifty regional columns in the local press.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you could put off any other journalists who may hassle you for a playable copy between the 10th of June and launch day. The most obvious people will be C&VG and Commodore User.

When I get a copy of the RLF letterhead I'll forward copies. In the meantime I enclose a (garbled) news snippet on Quake.

See ya.

Clive

Clive.

BEYOND

Telephone 01-837 2899

CHALLENGING SOFTWARE

Lector Court
151 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3AD

William Delaney
Mary Linehan
Francis Lee
Simon Goodwin
Clive Bailey

Date: April 22nd 1985

Mr Chris Anderson
Zzap 64
1, Church Terrace
YEOVIL
Somerset BA20 1HX

Dear Chris,

re: Psi Warrior & things

I enclose a [illegible] letter to Roger, who [illegible] with Shadowfire last Thursday. As you can see, when you run the Psi Warrior map in Zzap 64 I would like to offer you the idea of a [illegible] offer. Namely we would offer Psi Warrior at £[illegible] instead of the rrp of £9.95. The [illegible] would include a commission of £1.25 to Zzap/[illegible] for each game sold and Beyond would also [illegible] the [illegible] of P&P. What do you think?

OK you can have Boulderdash 2 on exclusive. As soon as the review copies arrive I'll get them to you, hopefully with something more of Quake.

And with regard to items [illegible] of my letter to Roger, I would be very interested to co-operate with you in [illegible] promotional ideas which may help you to sell more magazines and Beyond to sell more games.

Speak to you soon,

Clive

Clive Bailey.

If you recall, ZZAP! didn't have the exclusive on either game. Tut tut, Mr Bailey.

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Dear Boys already,

Finally! A hero to be proud of! After the wimpish Rockford and Thingie we finally have........DIM DIM, THE RUBBER FISH OF STUPIDITY, what a concept!, what a character, what a name, what a plonker.

Are the rights for Dim Dim, The Rubber Fish of Stupidity, THE GAME, still available? If so here is a blank cheque!

Also is it possible to exchange our office LCP Gregory - who refuses point blank to shower, thus making it impossible to load him up in public without distributing gas masks for a full sized cuddly Dim Dim, The Rubber Fish of Stupidity (Who, it seems is even prepared to bath in BR Tea and is a lot easier to cuddle in bed!

Is Dim Dim available for signing sessions? photo calls? can he sing?

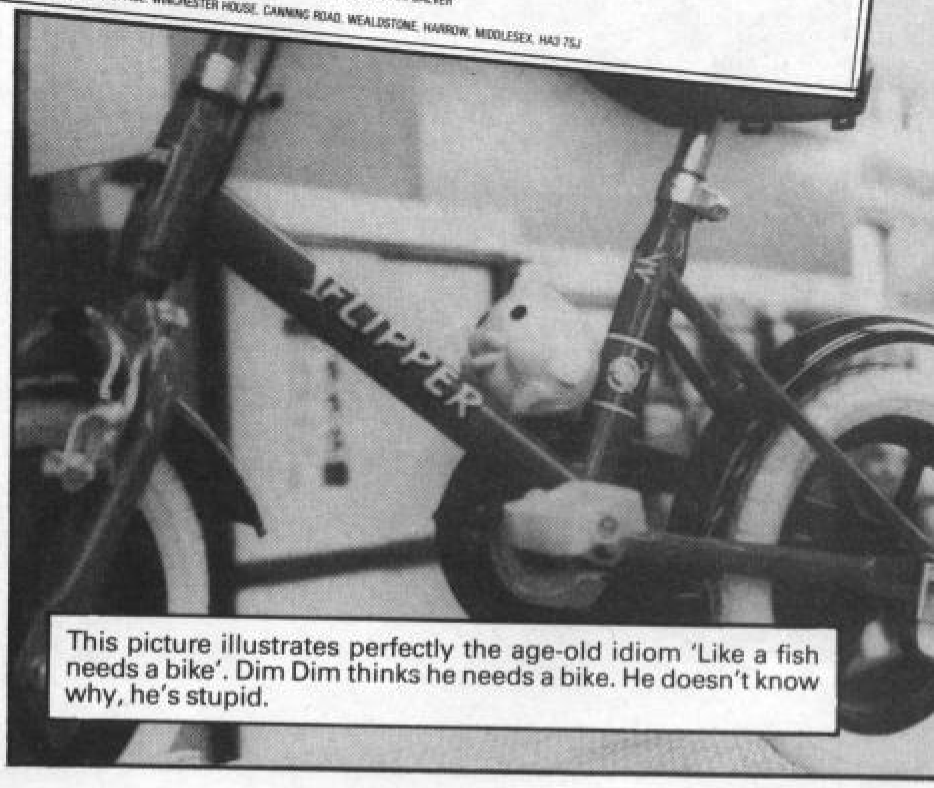
Finally may I say that in my opinion, Dim Dim, The Rubber Fish of Stupidity is a million times more cute than Rod Cousens!!!

Yours Admiringly,

Darryl Still (ASL).

P.S. I WANT TO PUT DIM DIM ON THE COVER FOR MAY, AFTER ALL IF JULIAN CAN BE A COVER STAR ....

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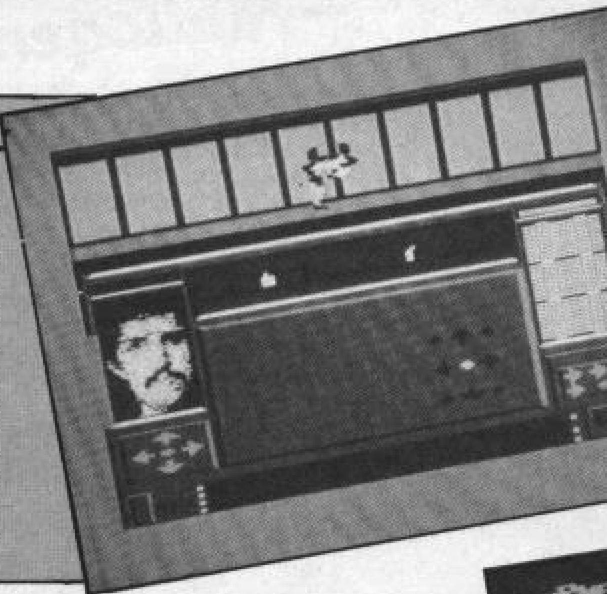
This picture illustrates perfectly the age-old idiom 'Like a fish needs a bike'. Dim Dim thinks he needs a bike. He doesn't know why, he's stupid.

BEYOND THE BOUNCES...

It appears that Beyond are to release *Bounces* — the future sport — in the near future, as oppose to Beyond's sub-label, Monolith, who were supposed to have it out by October last year. **The Shadow** is curious as to whether the delay and change of tact had anything to do with the programmers, Denton Designs, splitting up — or Beyond for matter, since both Bill Delaney and Clive Bailey left to form Nexus, leaving the remainder for British Telecom. Which neatly brings us onto . . .

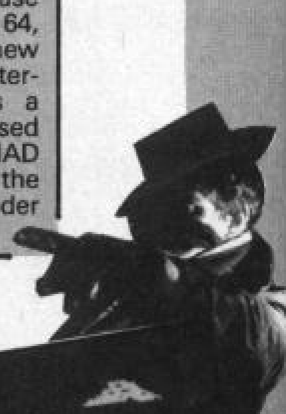


NEXUS – NEXUS



... *Nexus* — the game, the software house and the programming team. Yes *Nexus*, the game, is still being programmed by Nexus, the programming team, but is now due for release from Nexus, the software house, as opposed to Beyond. But why this strange obsession with the word 'Nexus'? **The Shadow** wonders: 'What next?' Will the members of Nexus change their names to Nexus by deed-poll?

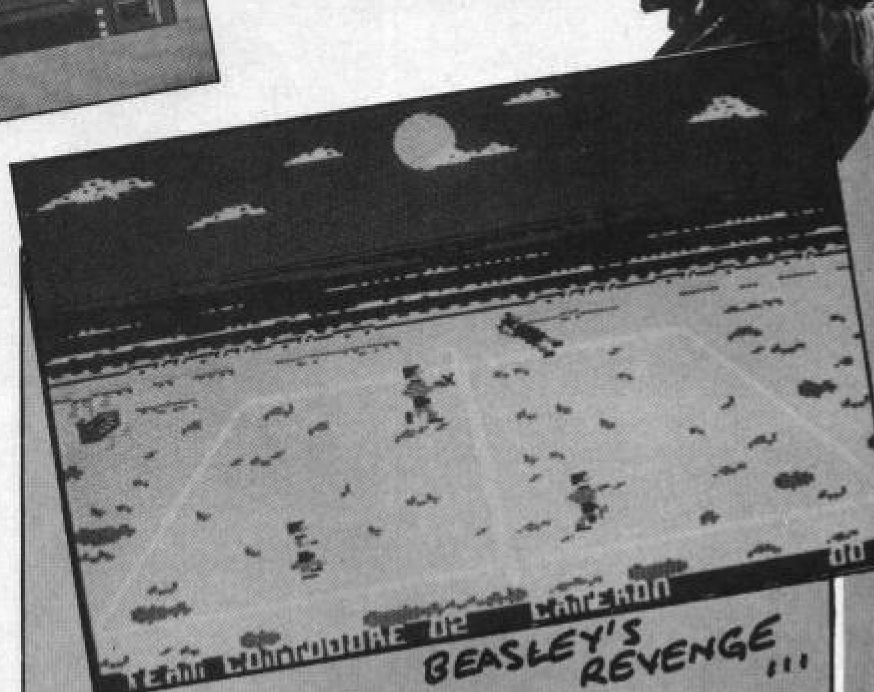
Budget Software supremos, Mastertronic, are set to release seven new games on the 64, and are launching two new labels in the process — Entertainment USA, which is a budget label for licensed American software, and MAD Chrome, which covers all the games that don't come under the MAD jurisdiction.





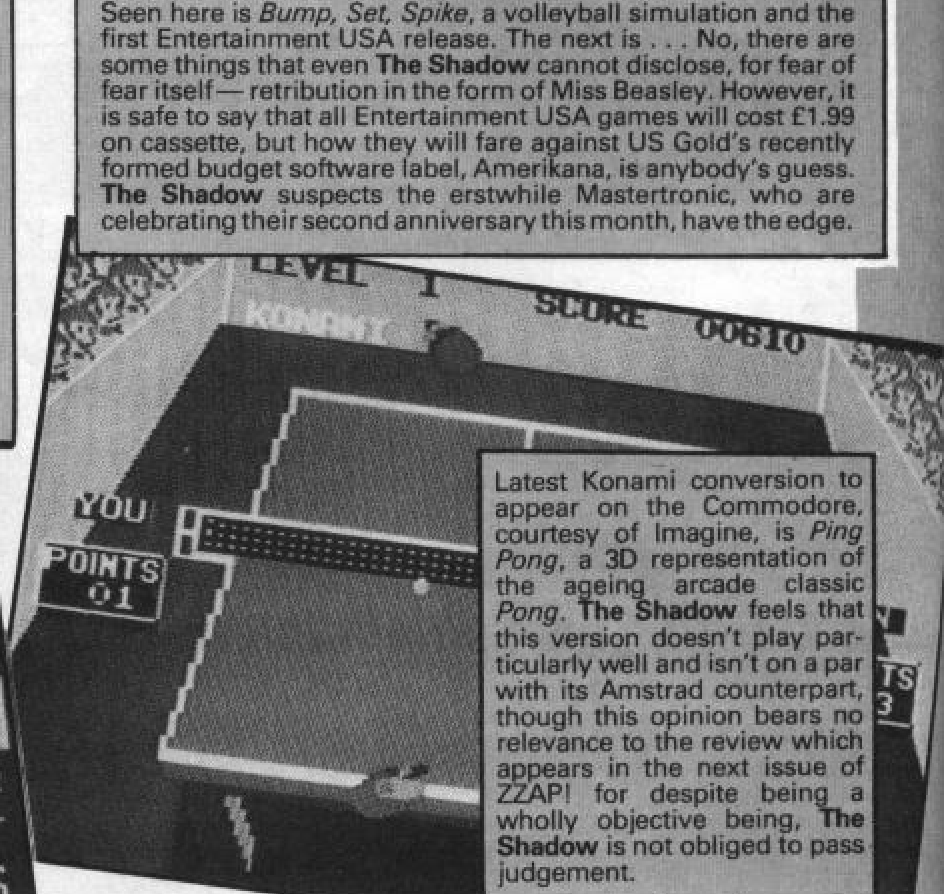
During a recent excursion to Tadley, home of that purveyor of fleeced flesh, Jeff Minter, **The Shadow** learnt that The Hairy One has hidden a coded message in *Batalyx*. It can be found by pressing the fire button when on the options screen — the first 27 sprites that fly past represent the letters of the alphabet (including 'space'), and those which follow are the message itself. Using the new 'alphabet' it is possible to decipher the hieroglyphs, but as it is such a long and tiresome process here is the complete transcript for your delectation . . .

'Hello there. The Yak speeks to anyone who is bothering to decode this. This game was written over a four month period, longer this time perhaps because I have had glandular fever all the way through it. Oh well, so it goes I guess. Yak hopes you like Mo Warden's zarjaz title screen — expect to see more of that stuff in the future. As I write this I am listening to me stereo and being mega knackered coz I stayed up all nite programming. I should be getting me Amiga this week — I hope so. If you aren't already on Compunet then get a modem and go on line at once, it's great fun. Interesting to see how many reviewers comprehend this one and whether ZZAP! slag it or not. I don't think ZZAP! likes hairy programmers. Still I don't mind, their mind is my ashtray. Well see ya. This is the beast signing off and looking fur the nearest goat'.

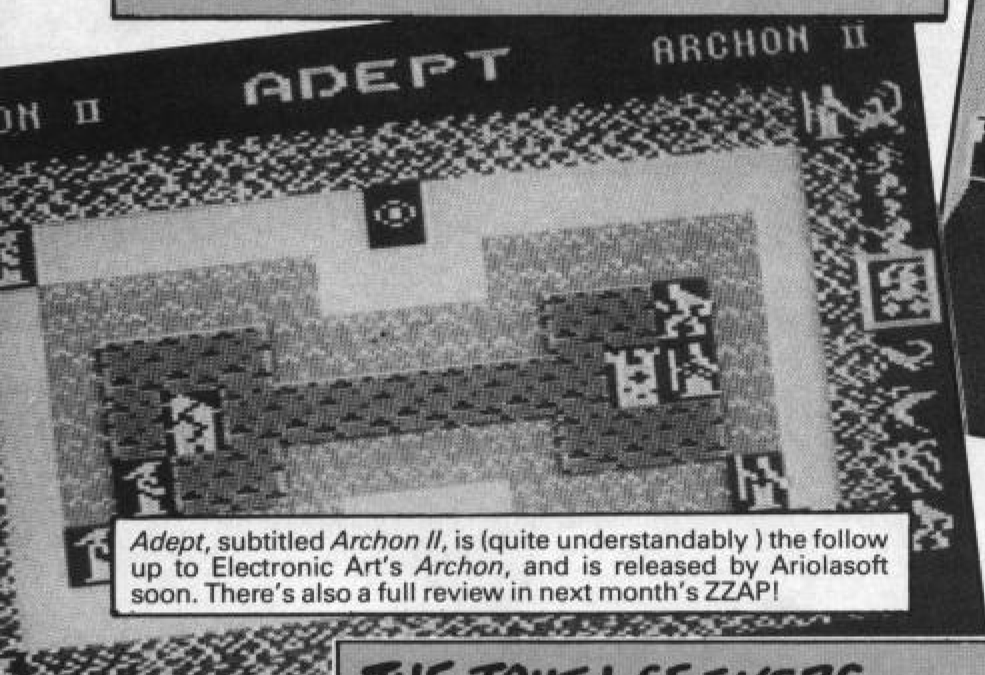


BEASLEY'S REVENGE ...

Seen here is *Bump, Set, Spike*, a volleyball simulation and the first Entertainment USA release. The next is . . . No, there are some things that even **The Shadow** cannot disclose, for fear of fear itself — retribution in the form of Miss Beasley. However, it is safe to say that all Entertainment USA games will cost £1.99 on cassette, but how they will fare against US Gold's recently formed budget software label, Amerikana, is anybody's guess. **The Shadow** suspects the erstwhile Mastertronic, who are celebrating their second anniversary this month, have the edge.



Latest Konami conversion to appear on the Commodore, courtesy of Imagine, is *Ping Pong*, a 3D representation of the ageing arcade classic *Pong*. **The Shadow** feels that this version doesn't play particularly well and isn't on a par with its Amstrad counterpart, though this opinion bears no relevance to the review which appears in the next issue of ZZAP! for despite being a wholly objective being, **The Shadow** is not obliged to pass judgement.



Adept, subtitled *Archon II*, is (quite understandably) the follow up to Electronic Art's *Archon*, and is released by Ariolasoft soon. There's also a full review in next month's ZZAP!

THE TRUTH SEEKERS GATHER ...



Well that's it for this month truth seekers as the bonds of melding that form **The Shadow** fail. Remember, a shadow cannot exist without light and **THE SHADOW** is cast by the light of truth. Any information to further the quest for knowledge should be sent to ,,,

THE SHADOW
c/o ZZAP! 64
P.O. BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

WERE YOU MINDBLOWN BY MINDSMEAR?

Those of you eagerly awaiting the release of *Mindsmear*, the mega—game previewed last month, should have a look at the cover date of that issue. Yes, it was April and *Mindsmear* was sadly just an April Fool, a mere product of the fertile imaginations of the ZZAP! reviewing team.

The amazing screen shots were knocked up by binary Magritte **Bob Stevenson**, and were just what they looked like — stills. The accompanying text does have it's serious points though, and one of them was to try and silence all the moaning minnies claiming that software for the 64 has reached its peak of sophistication.

Technically the whole piece was quite feasible, though the bit about the guitar solo was stretching the possible slightly. However, it **is** possible to use the disk drive as a slave processor, but no one seems to have tried it yet. It would speed up 3D games a great deal, as calculations could be carried out by the 'second processor', leaving the 64 with more time to do its own thing.

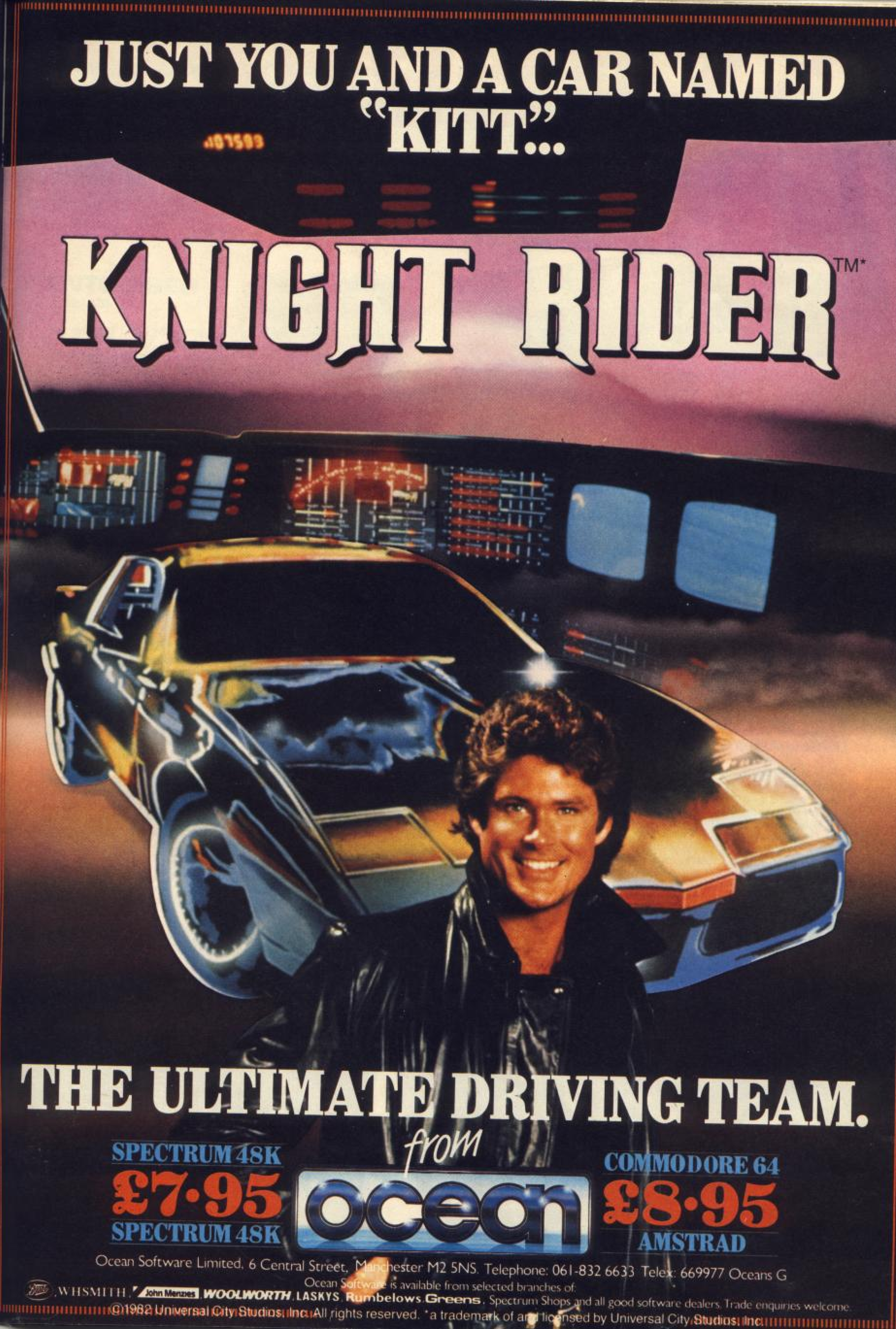
If you did get caught out, don't feel too bad since you're in the same boat as **Firebird**, **Nexus** and **Bug-Byte** (sorry Peter, looks like we owe you the drink), who all fell for our little 'joke' and inquired about the possibility of marketing *Mindsmear*. We apologise for any inconvenience caused, and leave you to feast your eyes once more on the truly stunning screen shots — but this time in full colour.







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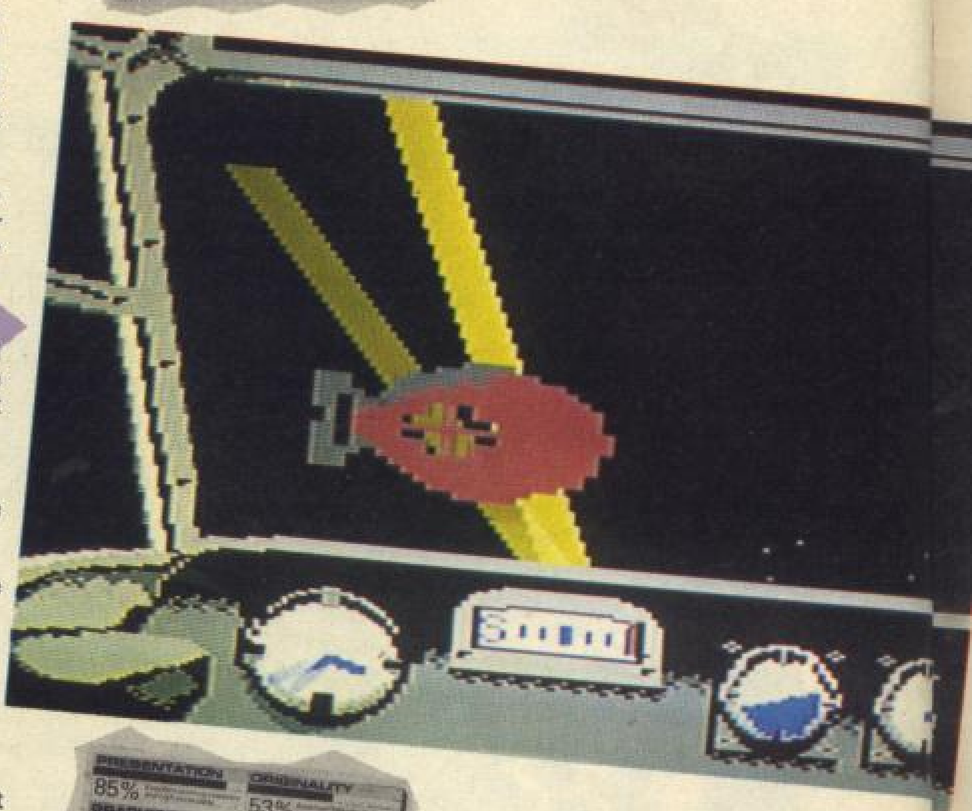
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ZZAPBACK! ZZAPBACK!

DAMBUSTERS
US Gold/Sydney Developments

PRESENTATION	79%	ORIGINALITY	73%
GRAPHICS	80%	HOOKABILITY	92%
SOUND	70%	LASTABILITY	76%
VALUE FOR MONEY	81%		

This flight simulation was the cause of much confusion in the ZZAP! offices. The game had arrived a month earlier and had been duly reviewed, just missing Sizzler status. Just after the review the problems began: we'd complained about two major niggling points which turned out to be bugs in the program, even the authors had failed to spot them. A series of hectic phone calls ensued, including one from America, the bugs were rectified and the game re-reviewed, this time getting a Sizzler rating — 'an excellent program bound to appeal to many tastes' was the overall opinion.



I remember there being many arguments about this game, both Gary and I thinking that the finished copy was unworthy of a Sizzler rating — it was far too boring in my eyes. Still, then-editor Chris Anderson thought that it should have been, and Sizzler it was.
JR

The cassette version of *Dambusters* was rather poor, and if we had seen it at the time it most definitely wouldn't have been a Sizzler. The disk version we reviewed wasn't too bad, but on reflection it doesn't really merit such high ratings either.
GP

(Jaz) The hookability rating is far too high and should have been late seventies, sound in the fifties and overall about mid seventies.

(Gaz)Hookability in the low seventies, sound high forties and value for money mid seventies.

DROPZONE
US Gold/Arena Graphics

PRESENTATION	85%	ORIGINALITY	53%
GRAPHICS	89%	HOOKABILITY	97%
SOUND	61%	LASTABILITY	96%
VALUE FOR MONEY	95%		

When this brilliant *Star Gate/Defender* based shoot em up arrived at ZZAP!, writing almost ground to a halt with the terrible twain disappearing into the reviewing room at every available opportunity to have another go. It showed in Gary's comment too: 'Excuse me, but I can't spend any more time writing trivial comments when I've got *Dropzone* to play,' he enthused. Julian's pooled his complete vocabulary and journalistic skills when he commented: 'it's £*%%!*! amazing'. Bob 'found it tough', and said he would 'be battling for months to come'... He did too!

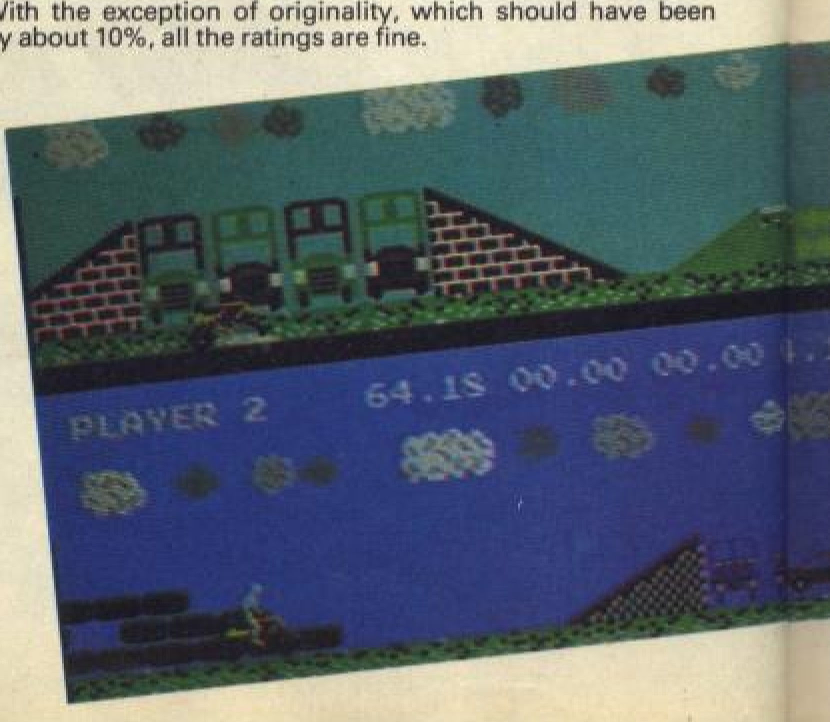
I loved this game when it came out, and a year later I still go back to it for the odd game. It's a superlative shoot em up and still the best on the 64 methinks.
JR



Dropzone is a well wicked shoot em up and is still one of the best available for the 64. No quibbles with the review, apart from the fact that it was compared to *Defender* when it is in fact a *Star Gate* clone.
GP

(Jaz) The sound rating was OTT but otherwise I think the ratings still stand.

(Gaz) With the exception of originality, which should have been lower by about 10%, all the ratings are fine.

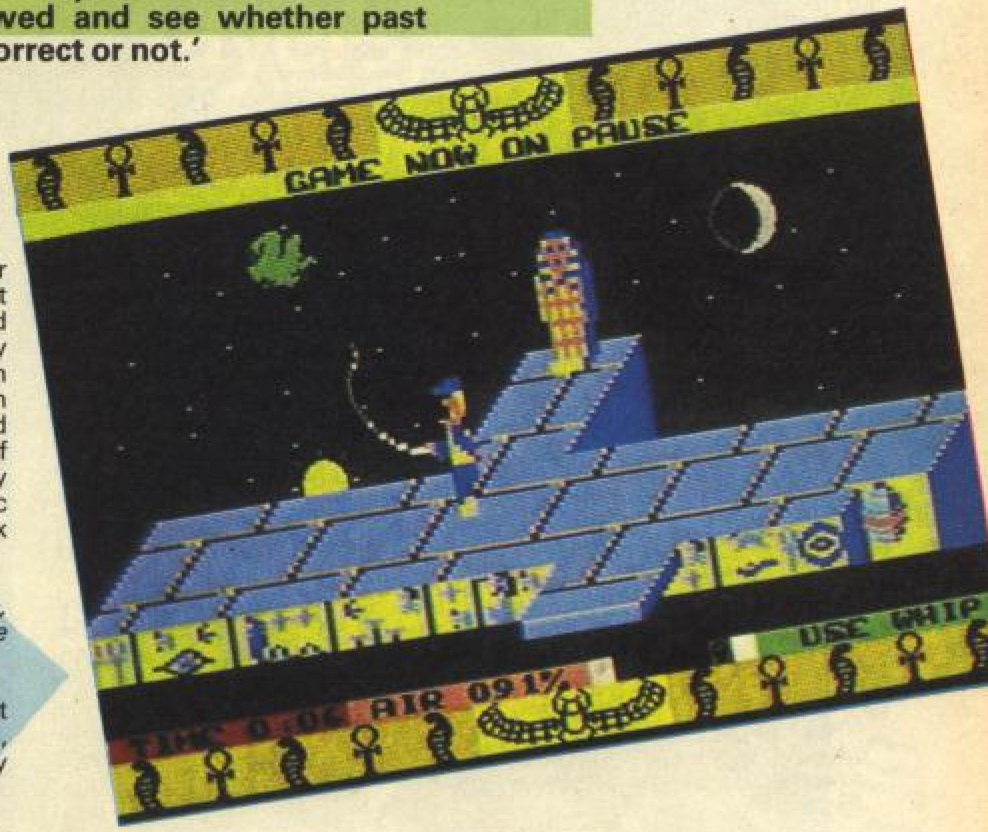


GAMES ZZAPBACKED:

Dambusters
Dropzone
Entombed
Kik Start
Rockford's Riot
Strangeloop
Gribbly's Day Out

'It's time for your ancient history lesson so concentrate and listen. Follow me down, down into the deep, dark, dank, depressing vaults of ZZAP! towers. Let me just open the door — oh, watch out for the spider webs. Ah, here it is . . . the Newsfield Domesday book, where the demented scribblings of a strange sect of journalists have been recorded for posterity. I'll just blow the dust off so we can see the hieroglyphs . . . *Issue 3*, hmmm. Let us analyse the conclusions of games previously reviewed and see whether past judgements passed are correct or not.'

ENTOMBED
Ultimate



The second Gold Medal award went to Ultimate's second Arthur Pendragon arcade adventure. The ZZAP! reviewers certainly got caught up with trying to escape from the ancient tomb and Gary and Julian spent many hours mapping and solving the game. Many readers found their fare share of problems and phone calls came in thick and fast, and the team soon came to dread the words 'I'm having problems with *Entombed* . . . Can you help me?' Jazza said that it was 'brilliant and guaranteed to keep you in the company of owls for weeks', whilst Gazza admitted that it had him 'thoroughly engrossed from the very first location'. Bob got very enthusiastic and wrote 'Wow! Great! Amazing! Incredible! (Get the idea)'. I think everybody did.

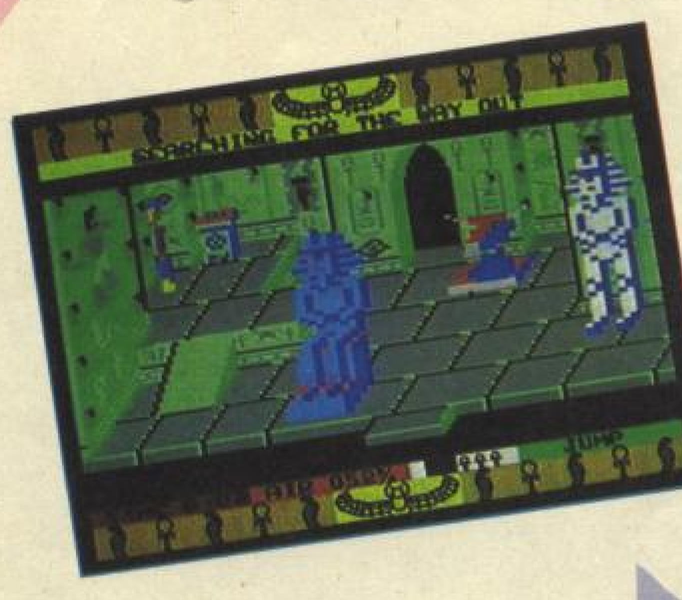
On reflection I don't think this should been a gold medal game, especially with a rating of only 93%. It's a great arcade adventure though with some really excellent puzzles to solve. **JR**

While I thought *Entombed* was a very good arcade adventure, I don't think it deserved a Gold Medal. It was overrated in most respects, especially originality as it wasn't that original. Also, it was quite easy to solve and the lastability rating was too high.
GP

(Jaz) Graphics should be around the mid-eighties mark and the value for money just under ninety. The other marks are okay I suppose.

(Gaz) Presentation down to low seventies, graphics low eighties, sound low forties, originality high sixties, lastability high seventies and value for money low eighties.


PRESENTATION 83%
GRAPHICS 92%
SOUND 58%
ORIGINALITY 94%
HOOKABILITY 97%
LASTABILITY 91%
VALUE FOR MONEY 93%



KIK START
Mastertronic

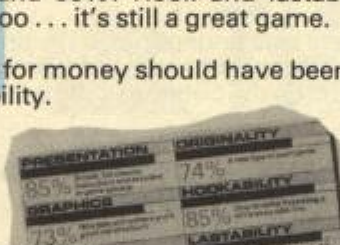
Originally released on the Mr Chip label Mastertronic took this two player, split screen Motorcycle stunt game and released it as a budget title. The game has eight courses which have to be raced over and some of the are really mean. Although it's fun playing as a single player the game's strongest point is the two player head to head which really brings out the competitive streak in the most placid of players. It had been a personal favourite of Gary's for quite some time and he told readers that 'once you start playing you won't want to stop'. Both Bob and Julian commented on its 'incredible' price of £1.99. 'Go get it now' said JR, while Bob 'thoroughly recommended' it.

An incredible title for only £1.99 and a game that still gets loaded now and then. The two player option is fab and provides as much excitement as Pitstop II.
JR

I thought this was great value before it was even re-released as a budget title. The graphics and sound aren't too hot, but it's a very addictive game, especially with two players.
GP

(Jaz) The value for money rating was terribly underrated — it should have been around 95%! Hook and lastability should have been slightly higher too . . . it's still a great game.

(Gaz)Yes, value for money should have been around 95% as should hook and lastability.


PRESENTATION 85%
GRAPHICS 73%
SOUND 61%
ORIGINALITY 74%
HOOKABILITY 85%
LASTABILITY 86%
VALUE FOR MONEY 90%

ROCKFORD'S RIOT
Monolith

The follow on to the popular *Boulderdash* caused Bob and Chris to have multiple hernias, but the other two reviewers weren't quite so impressed. With sixteen completely new screens and a couple of new features the game has ZZAP!'s very own mini-hero, Rockford, collecting a set number of diamonds before he can move onto the next screen. Bob thought it was 'every bit as brilliant as the original', and Julian decided that 'if you liked *Boulderdash* then you'll like this. If you don't then this won't convert you.' Gary, after having boulders

thrown at him by an irate Rockford, apologised and eventually admitted that 'I like it'.

I enjoyed playing the game but found it too similar to its forerunner to rave about it. It was also easier which was a bit silly — any Boulderdash *expert could whizz through the 16 screens with ease.*
JR

True, I did like *Rockford's Riot*, but I was disappointed with it all the same as it looked and played far too much like *Boulderdash*. I think this was a feeling shared by everyone and was hence reflected in the ratings.
GP

(Jaz) The game was slightly overrated, but only just. The value for money, hook and lastability ratings should all be taken down a couple of points.

(Gaz) I've had second thoughts and I reckon it was underrated by about 5%, although originality was definitely too high and should have been around 15%



PRESENTATION	85%
ORIGINALITY	30%
GRAPHICS	71%
HOOKABILITY	85%
SOUND	59%
LASTABILITY	84%
VALUE FOR MONEY	82%

STRANGELOOP
Virgin

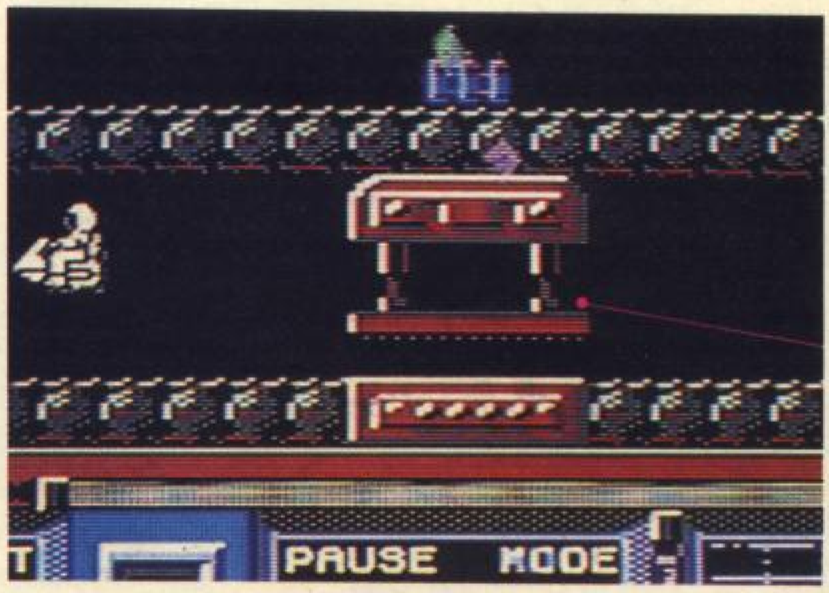
This excellent arcade adventure was first waved aside by the illustrious (!) reviewing team, but after giving it a few more goes they soon became very enthusiastic. The idea of the game is to shut down a large space factory which has been interfered with and is now threatening Earth's existence. There are 256 beautiful locations and some fiendish puzzles to solve. 'An instant cult classic. Brilliant atmospheric backdrops, plenty of action and lots to get your grey matter clanking back into action', said Julian. 'I enjoyed the exploring and blasting of this arcade adventure', exclaimed Bob, and Gary found it 'enjoyable and atmospheric'.

The graphics are really excellent and lend a great atmosphere to the game. I liked playing this and it's still one of the better arcade adventures available for the Commodore.
JR

At first I thought *Strangeloop* was boring, but after playing it for a while I started to enjoy it. However, shortly thereafter I lost interest, and now I find it really boring to play.
GP

(Jaz) I think the ratings are fine apart from the hookability which should have been mid eighties.

(Gaz) The ratings were OK, apart from lastability and value for money which should both have been around the 80% mark.



PRESENTATION	69%	[illegible]
ORIGINALITY	78%	[illegible]
GRAPHICS	88%	[illegible]
HOOKABILITY	74%	[illegible]
SOUND	44%	[illegible]
LASTABILITY	91%	[illegible]
VALUE FOR MONEY	86%	[illegible]



PRESENTATION	92%	[illegible]
ORIGINALITY	94%	[illegible]
GRAPHICS	82%	[illegible]
HOOKABILITY	91%	[illegible]
SOUND	74%	[illegible]
LASTABILITY	88%	[illegible]
VALUE FOR MONEY	90%	[illegible]

GRIBBLY'S DAY OUT
Hewson Consultants

It was love at first sight when the reviewing team met Andrew Braybrook's wonderful character, *Gribbly Grobbly*. The game involves guiding Gribbly around 16 different surreal locations of the planet Blabgor, and rescuing eight little Baby Gribblets found about the place. Bob explained that 'the game is unashamedly cute and benefits greatly from it' and Gary admitted that the 'cute, amusing graphics and excellent control methods got me immediately hooked'. Julian reckoned that 'collecting Gribblets has never been so much fun'.

A brilliant game which was sadly missed by many Commodore owners. At eight quid it's great value for money and well worth purchasing if you haven't got it.
JR

Gribbly's is really neat and was underrated at the time. It's a superb, polished product which deserves greater acclaim. Unfortunately it didn't have the same effect on the public as it did on us. Never mind.
GP

(Jaz) In my opinion the game was underrated — 92 or 93% would be more fitting to the overall mark of the game.

(Gaz) Presentation mid nineties, lastability up to mid nineties and value for money around 94%

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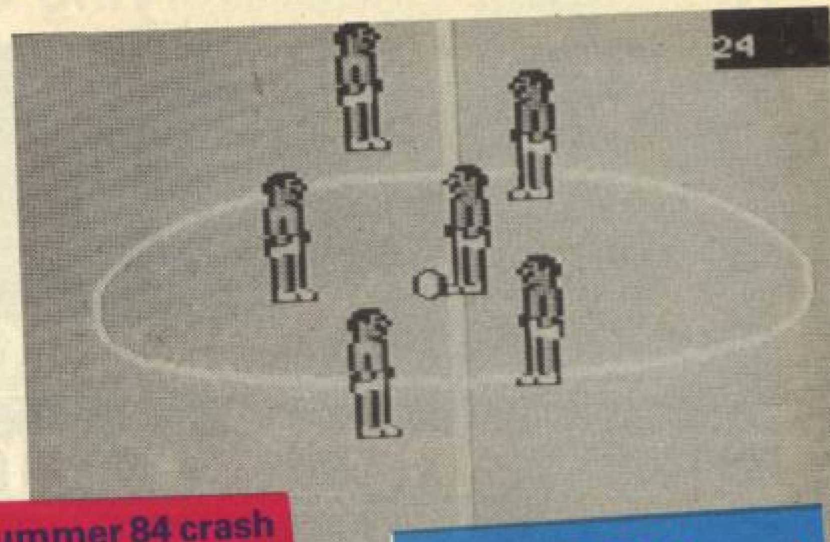
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At last — the Commodore version of MATCH DAY.



Even before the spectacular summer 84 crash of Liverpool-based Imagine (The Name of the Game), in neighbouring Manchester, Ocean had emerged as the other software biggie. Acquiring the title and goods of Imagine from the receiver Ocean quickly set about . . .

RENAMING THE NAME OF THE GAME

Today OCEAN and IMAGINE have grown to become one of the largest software houses in Britain. They've certainly had their ups and downs and have acquired a reputation of heavy promotion and for not always sticking to their release dates. JULIAN RIGNALL was sent to Manchester one cold wintry day to chat to the men behind the hype.

Unlike the old Imagine's magnificent Liverpool edifice, Ocean's Manchester offices in Central Street are surprisingly modest, both in size and appearance. The first person I spoke to was **Colin Stokes**, formerly part of the old Imagine. I asked him to explain the re-emergence of Imagine.

'We wanted to buy the Imagine name and the logo. Obviously, being closely in contact with the liquidators, you say, "what's up for grabs, is there anything which will be of use to us?" After all, with all the advertising, whether good, bad or indifferent, it was a market name that was known. You had to have been on Mars not to have known the name of Imag ine, so it was already established. The difficulty was whether you considered it as a Titanic — was it worth raising or not?

'The re-emergence of Imagine has been really successful — with the marketing strength that Ocean has it was really easy to resurrect the name of Imagine. People didn't say "Let's hide. We don't want your products, we've already got thousands in our warehouse," they just took it as another opportunity to sell software and make a profit.'

And how easy was it for Imagine to start again, and how were you received second time around?

'From a personal point of view it was easy for me because I was originally the sales manager with Imagine anyway. So when I went knocking on doors saying, "Here I am, I'm an Imagine representative again," it was all very friendly and well received. We bought the name and we set up a deal to take *World Series Baseball* (a ZZAP! Sizzler), one of the games made available by the liquidators, which was a strong title, there wasn't another like it around. That and *Wizadore* on the BBC were the opening gambits, then *Hypersports* came along which got good reviews.'

With the whole project taking off so swiftly I was curious to know what was happening at Imagine during that period.

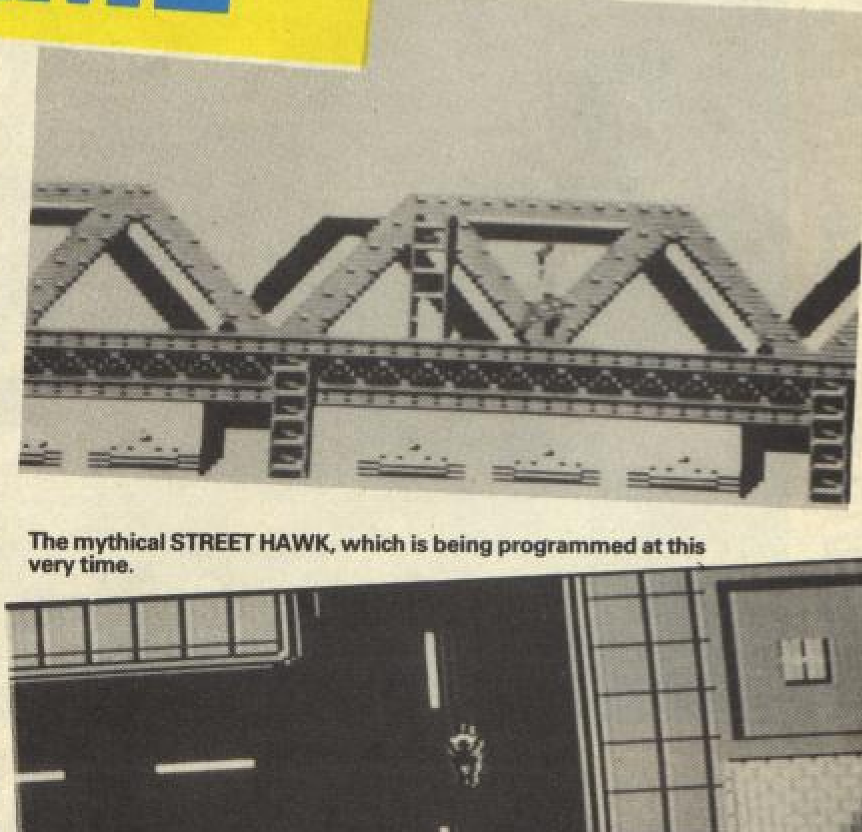
'I think that the hype was the actual link-up with the Ocean group and Konami,' Colin explained. 'That really set the scene, because if everyone knew what Konami was all about they'd realise that there was some really high-calibre products amongst it all. We'd looked *Hypersports* as the major product, after all when you do a deal you look at the goodies and the baddies. You always get one or two weak titles in a deal, but we looked at *Hypersports* as being the real blockbuster, and that's been proved to be quite correct because it's been out since last summer and we're still taking orders for it now!'

The subject then turned to the development of new titles. Mr Stokes revealed, 'We try to keep the best titles in house so we can have a day-to-day viewing on how the programmers are getting on, but if you appreciate the size of our operation with US Gold, Imagine and Ocean you really do have to contract out. We have up to sixty programmers contracted out at one time which is very, very tough to coordinate. With the Imagine thing (arcade conversions) the hardest thing is reference — for example *Yie Ar Kung Fu* was referenced directly from the arcade machine. This is exactly the case with *Green Beret*, the next one in the Konami range, that's a super product by the way. The thing is we're not allowed to be distracted from the original. We do have to follow the program exactly and can't say "this is a little weak in this section let's change it".'

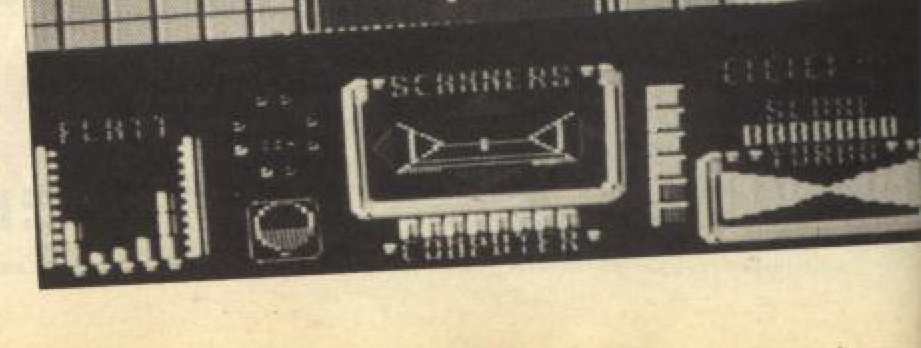
I was quite surprised at that, and enquired whether the programmers ever felt tied down by such a hefty ruling?

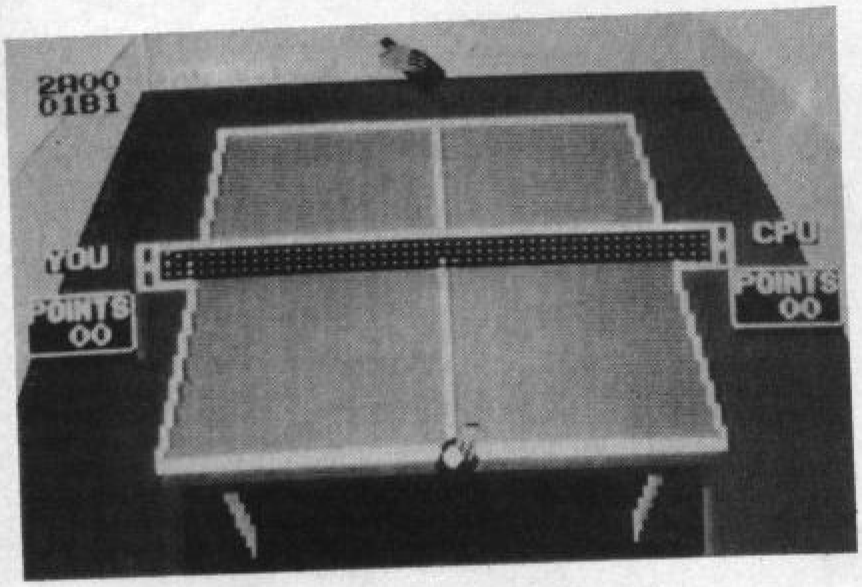
'Yes, they do. The contract that we have is obviously very

The forthcoming GREEN BERET.



The mythical STREET HAWK, which is being programmed at this very time.





An early version screen of PING PONG — still under development.

lucrative, Konami are the best for arcade programs and we're very glad to be on board with them. So if part of the deal is that you produce the product as per original we're pleased to do so. We're just a vehicle for converting the games to the home micro, we can't show our own expression, that's the deal. The programmers come in and say, "I'd like to do this and that" but if it distracts from the original I have to answer no.'

And do Konami have the final say to whether a game is released or not?

'Well, we can't produce a game until they've looked at it. It can have you sitting on the edge of your seat in fact!' exclaimed Mr Stokes.

Ping Pong is quite an odd release, after all it never really appeared in British arcades in any large numbers. I asked Mr Stokes what he thought of the game, especially after its very favourable AMTIX accolade review.

'*Ping Pong* is a dark horse really, but it's a super product and I think it'll do very well.' And after looking at the Commodore version I quite agreed.

With the Konami series soon to be converted in their entirety I asked about Imagine's plans for the future.

'Well, we have lots of ideas bubbling under at the moment which are unfortunately confidential, but you name it films . . . it's all there for the taking if you know what you're looking for. Once *Green Beret* is out of the way we'll take a deep breath and look again. We've got enough plans to get us through to March 1987 it's just a question of how we go about it.'

Despite the concentration on conversions or tie-ins, Imagine did release a Spectrum game called *Movie* recently, and it received a CRASH Smash. Its Yugolslavian programmer just sent it in the post and a deal was made with him over the phone. I asked Colin whether that happened often.

'With your name constantly being dragged into conversation you do get people bringing in products knowing that if it's sold through Ocean or Imagine that it'll do well with nice artwork, so we get a large postbag on that side. Some are good and some are bad but we also evaluate the software on the merits of the programmer's future. The enclosed thing might be very ordinary but there might be touches where if he wants to do something else and work with us then we might give a sort of retainer and say send your next product to us, or try out a conversion.'

Ocean's chairman, David Ward, expanded, 'When we started in the old days of mail, the days order when you advertised in *Your Computer* or something and waited until the next Tuesday and hoped that there would be some replies, put them in a jiffy bag and off they'd go — at that time programmers would be working in their attic after school, but now it has become far more sophisticated. We first got about twenty people aboard, and most of them stuck with us. My guess is that by Christmas we'll have about 100-120 programmers working for us, especially now with all the Ultimate games, Ocean's bigger title range and Imagine's arcade label. You see, while we're open for people to be able to walk in the door we're always open for new ideas. The programmers and coders are the creative aspect of the industry — anyone can go around licencing titles. What you have to have at the end of the day is some sort of intellectual property which we then publish. I always say that I'll publish anything that somebody brings in if it looks good. We're always trying to broaden our horizons of both the type of games we sell and the age group we're aiming at so we can get the largest possible audience.'

With Ocean releasing a lot of 'licenced' games I asked Colin Stokes to explain the process of getting a licence for something like, say, *Rambo*.

'It's a question of the strength of the guys here. If you go to the agent and say we want to produce a game, we have to assure them that we're not going to bring the name of our friend with the muscles down, and because of the size of the company and the market presence you stand more of a chance pitching in and getting it than a lesser company.'

> *"You had to have been on Mars not to have known the name of Imagine. The difficulty was whether you considered it as a Titanic — was it worth raising or not?"*

'What we do is look at the market place and see what commodities would do well. When you're in the situation when there's a mass media coverage you just jump on and do a product, that's what makes sense. All of the endorsements we've had have worked very well, *Frankie* and all.'

Just lately British Telecom seem to be taking the headlines with all the money they are prepared to splash out on programmers and development. Does Imagine feel they are battling with British telecom over control of top programmers?.

'I feel that people are looking to beat us rather than the other way round,' Colin started, 'That's why we try to offer the best kind of deals to programmers, so they will come back. Where people go splashing out money I have to suggest that that doesn't always ensure that the final product is a good one. Hopefully we have a consistency and we're always going to be around, but we're usually too involved to be looking at what other people are doing. If somebody said that British Telecom have offered me three times the money to do something then we'd say take it, and we'll see you after you've finished it. We can't afford that thing to escalate because before long we'd be paying extortionate fees.'

The burning question: what on Earth happened to *Knight Rider* and *Street Hawk*?

'With a conversion you designate three months, give or take a few weeks, and unless there is a major bug found, twelve weeks usually suffice. Now, the game was started in-house and the guy spent three months, then four, then five. Now, what do you do as a commercial company? We've said that it was going to be the first of the month and now it's two months late and hasn't appeared. What happens is that you have to gear your advertising to the date that the programmer tells you. You go up and book X amount of space in magazines, and you've got the programmer sitting there and you say, "do you promise that the game is going to be finished by then?" and he says, "no problem". What are you supposed to do? There are only a limited amount of carrots that you can dangle in front of them. Now the three months turn into several which doesn't do the company or our image any good — we're always very susceptable to this sort of situation. *Knight Rider* and *Street Hawk* were the same.

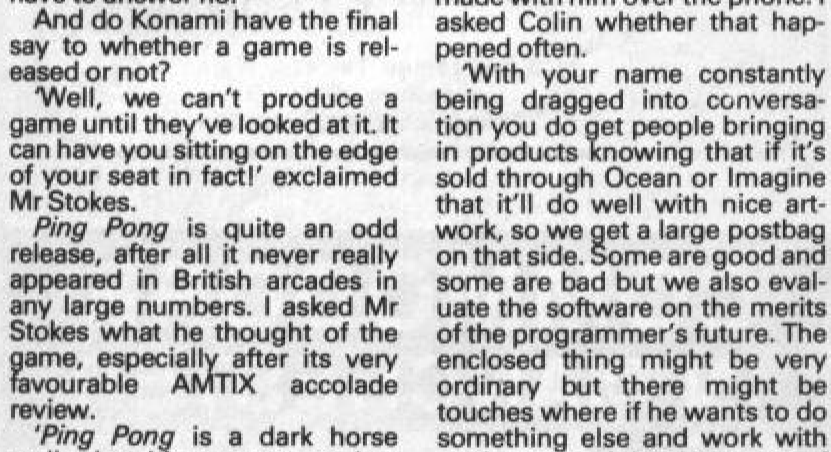
'Look at our Commodore schedule for Easter: *Ping Pong*, *Superbowl*, *Movie*, *V*, *Green Beret*, *Knight Rider*, *They Sold a Million II* and *Street Hawk*! As you can see, it's quite a task really, but we'll pull through.'

Interested by the mention of a follow on to *They Sold a Million* David Ward told me that *Bruce Lee*, *Match Point*, *Match Day* and *Entombed* were to go on it. I asked him about the current spate of compilations, why the sudden increase?

'The whole justification for a compilation didn't really exist before because within six to eight months the game stopped selling just because the coding was out of date, and that was true up to about last year. Things like *Shadowfire* and *Frankie*, maybe, were the first products which had coding which would be relevant for the next few years. Now you can bring them out in another sort of form and they haven't been made redundant.'

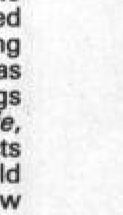
Looking at the future of the industry I asked Mr Stokes his views.

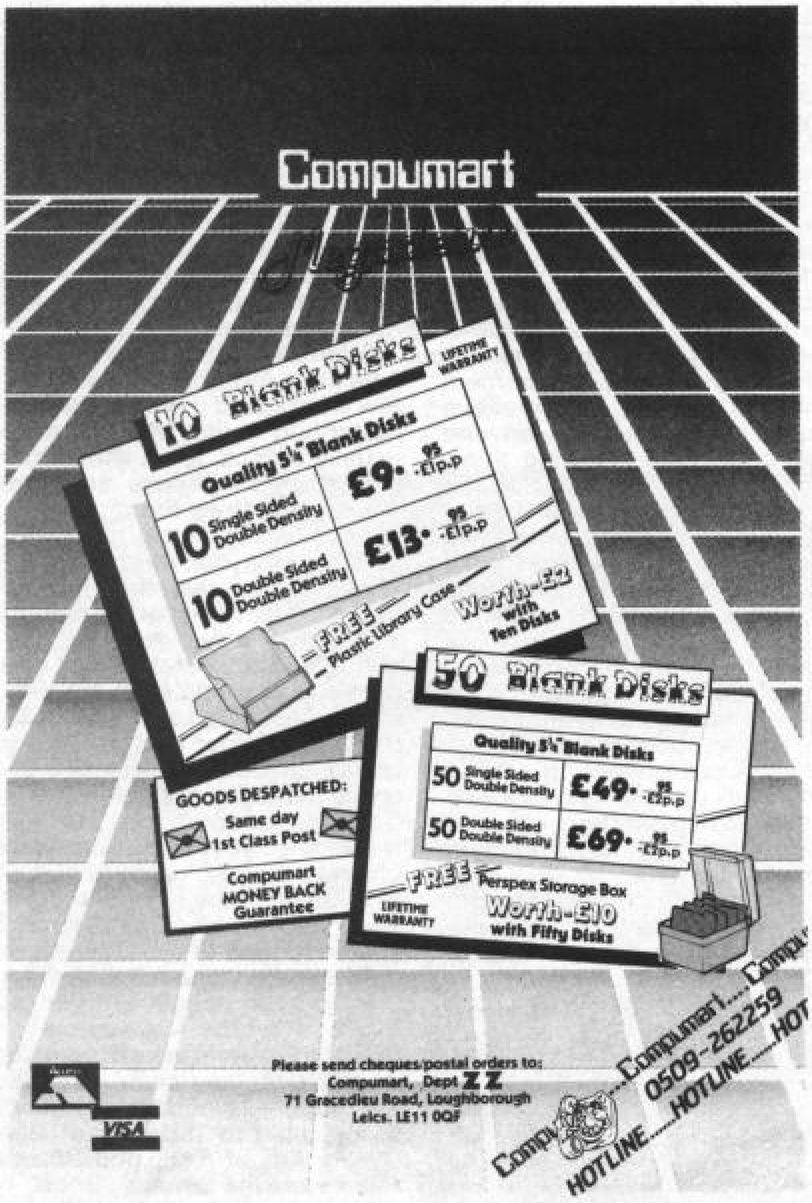
'It's a very fickle industry. There are no guarantees for the software houses and there are none for the distributors, so who would be brave enough to predict what's going to happen this time next year? There has been a marked increase in the quality of software, but you're only ever as good as the quality of your games. You have your hardcore following and you have to try and keep their interest. We have to move with the times.



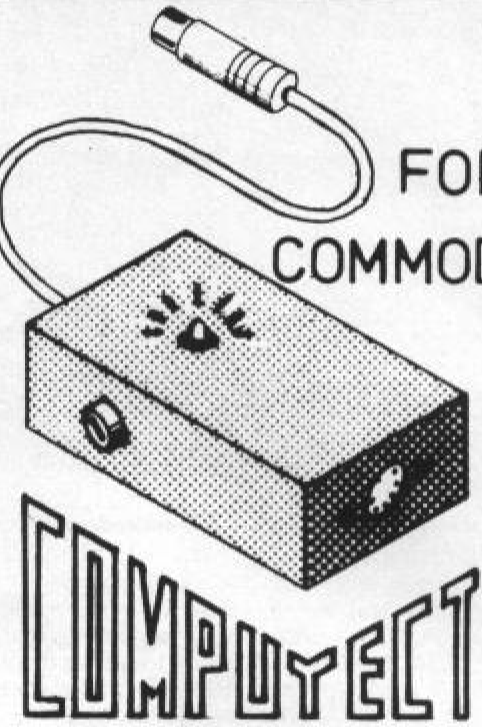
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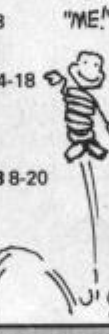


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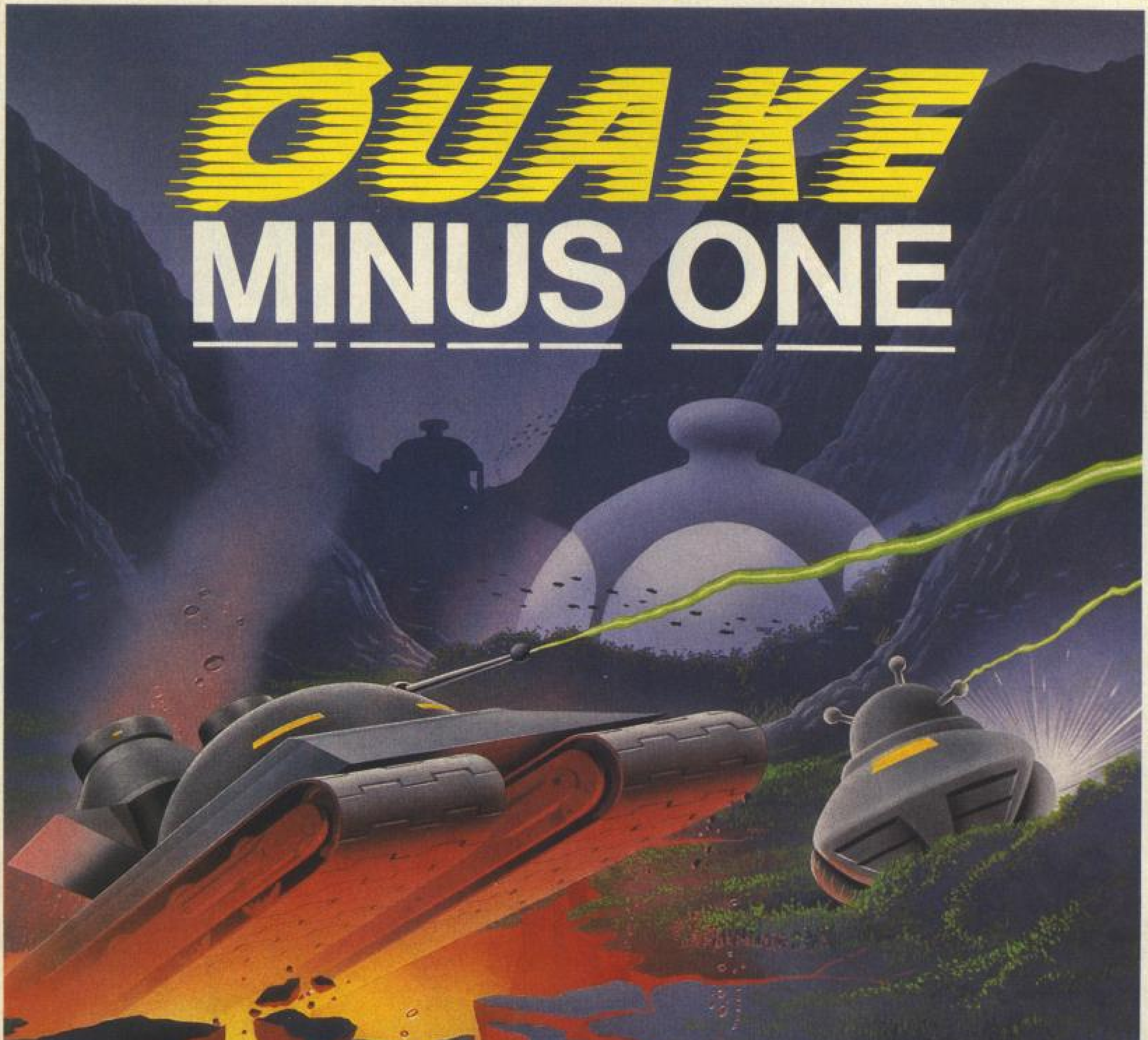
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SEANCE ON A WET AFTERNOON



"HE MANAGES TO LOOK QUITE WITH IT AND GURU-LIKE, EH?"

Gary Liddon having after lunch log-on problems.

Well there we were, sitting in our office on the 34th floor of ZZAP! Towers, gently degenerating and wondering what had happened to the British Software Industry ('is there anybody there?') when there came this violent rap on the table top. Leaping from post-luncheon trance to seance takes some effort, and while composing ourselves to receive a communication from Beyond (probably to tell us that despite Clive Bailey's sudden move to Nexus, they're still alive), Mr Penn realised that the rapping noise was caused by the modem that had fallen out of the back of the Commodore, so we decided to log onto the Net.

The ID went in as did the password when what should we greeted with but, 'You are debarred from the system'. Understandably enough this caused much worry and we started to scan our memories for anything rude that may have been UPLDed to cause such obvious offence from Compunet. But our minds drew blank and it was generally decided that a call to the gorgeous pouting (sic) Jane was in need. Luckily the system's rudeness to us was due to a glitch within the mainframe software that objected to the space in our ID (ZZAP! 64) and after a bit fiddling a new ID and password were issued. If any of you are wondering as to the relevance of all this rhetoric, it's to inform anyone wishing to MBX us that ZZAP!'s ID is **ZZAP!64** (no space).

On the subject of MBXs we must apologise for our lack of consistency in answering any mail sent our way. From now on we duly promise to reply to anyone who wants to chat to us. Specific apologies should go to the **Dude** and **Tinsle**, seemingly lonesome uploaders into our ZZAP! spot in the Zapclub. This is also an area we intend to use far more often in the near future.

Another net user that deserves a mention is **JB9**, a nice type of guy who just happens to hate me (this is Gary Liddon speaking). There I was happily strolling onto Partyline when a flurry of unprintable abuse was hurled in the ZZAP ID's general direction. What prompted this we do not know but we'd be interested to learn why JB9 feels so peeved.

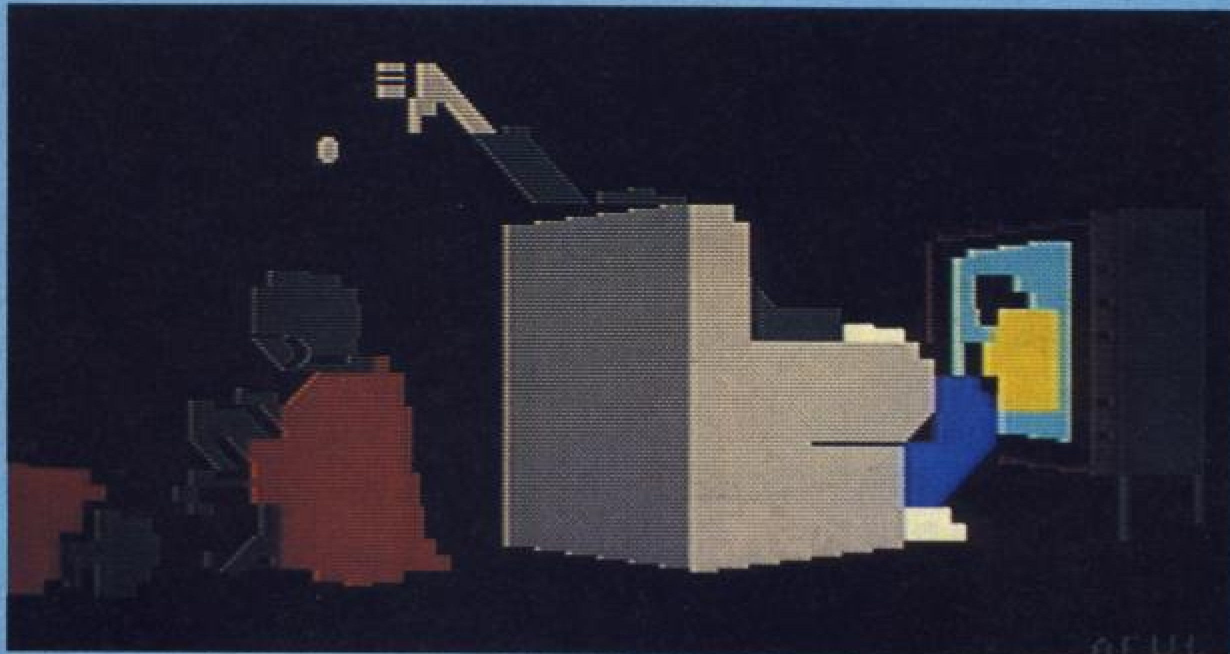
Quite interesting was the arrival of the first ZZAP! CNET bill, did we really spend that much? One thing we did fork out cash for is the Doug Hare (MACH81) editor enhancer. This neat bit of coding extends the normal CNET frame editor held within the modems's ROM into a very comprehensive lo-res art package. The range of functions really is quite astounding. Very neat is the ability to plonk inertia onto the plotting cursor allowing curves to drawn very nicely indeed with a joystick. Access to text is also provide within two by two characters. Different character sets can be loaded in and each character displayed can be coated with a wash of colours allowing metallic like sheens to adorn any characters shown. Any of you cynics out there should have a look at Richard Hare's lo-res screens as created with this editor enhancement. They really are quite stunning, and although it costs £6.95 it's certainly worth the money.

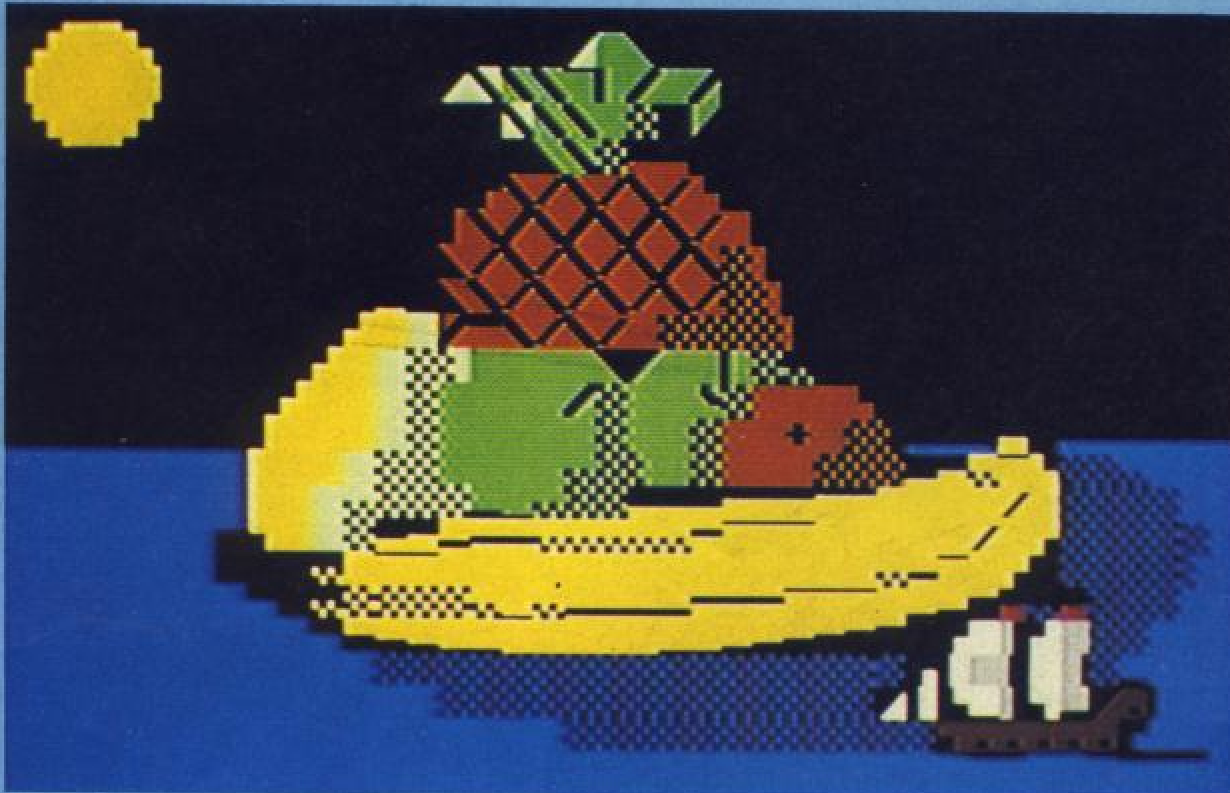
Well that's about it for this month, and as usual I shall hand you over Brigitte Van Reuben, art critique of the CNET Art Gallery, who, despite the abuse hurled in **her** direction by an annoyed reader in last month's ZZAP! Rrap, remains undismayed, unrepentant and as charmingly verbose as ever.

THE ART GALLERY

CLEAR CONSCIENCE, LIVE AID (Hugh Riley)

This older work of Riley's remains very much in the mainstream of his Daumier-esque lampoons, in which we see a a seated figure calming his conscience by watching a TV charity programme while dropping only crumbs of comfort to the real sufferers. In viewing this work shame is the only sentiment we can express as we unwrap the tinfoil from our next microwave heated TV dinner.





UNAMED (Hugh Riley)

Riley returns to the pop art imagery, mixing traditional painterly subject matter with an aggressively unconventional way of presenting it. The fruit is drawn in strong black outlines, using flat, abstracted colours to define the psychic intensity of each fruit's flavour, and the whole is set in a dichotomous situation when we realise the foreground object is an old pirate sailing ship and the bowl of fruit is in reality an idyllic South Sea island.

SHORE (Hugh Riley)

What ties this image to his 'Our Lisa', is Riley's continuing preoccupation with construct art, a development of Patrick Caulfield's sixties pictures where strong colour fields were tied together with strong black lines, an abstraction of the real world to what has become the more familiar images of advertising hoardings. Pop art virtually demands a referential idea that shatters the fragile art concept, and here it is provided by the computer game cross hair sight, set firmly on the seagull.



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** Symbol table may be saved and loaded for cross reference and selective assembly of subroutine libraries.*

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THE MONITOR

has all the usual features of a relocatable front-panel debugger plus:

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Update:
Marooned on an alien world and with a desperate quest on your hands you are inclined to take all offers of help that come your way. Even if an offer comes from someone or something pretty nasty, the last thing you do is shoot him, or it, dead . . .

THE TERMINAL MAN





STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


SOON THE VORTEX STRAIGHTENED OUT AND DELIVERED THEM TO A WIDE SPACIOUS HALL...
WHAT IS THIS PLACE, CROSS? WHO BUILT IT?
YEAH, AND SINCE THEY LEFT THE LIGHT ON ARE THEY STILL HERE?
MY GUESS IS THAT THIS IS A PORT. PROBABLY THE ONE THEY USED WHEN THEY DESERTED THE SYSTEM... IT ONLY HAS A 'WAY IN' FOR PASSENGERS —
NO 'WAY OUT' —
— AS THESE INDIVIDUALS DISCOVERED WHEN THEY CAME DOWN...
AND JUST HOW ARE WE TO GET OUT, CROSS?
FIRST WE FIND OUR FUEL CELLS — THEN WE THINK ABOUT IT, COME ON!
THE SEARCH LED THEM DOWN ONE OF THE SMALLER SIDE PASSAGES. THE LIGHTING HAD FAILED HERE...
CROSS, I DON'T LIKE THIS...
NOR I —
— I SENSE SOMETHING ALIVE HERE —
AIEEEE!!



What now, Cross?


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